

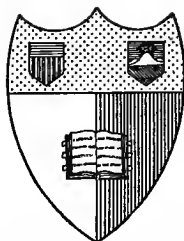
THE LADY OF THE LILY FEET

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AH LING, THE LADY OF THE LILY FEET, AS BRIDE.

THE LADY OF THE LILY FEET

AND OTHER

STORIES OF CHINATOWN

BY

HELEN F. CLARK



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PREFACE

THE writer begs permission to say to all who may read this volume that the condition herein described exists to-day, and not in China only, but in New York, San Francisco, and all those large centers wherein the Chinese have established themselves in any considerable numbers. It must be to the regret of every lover of womanly virtue that it is so. It must be to the grief of every woman who sympathizes with her sisters of the Orient in their unspeakable sufferings that such things take place here, and with almost the freedom that they occur in China. But such is undeniably the case. Exclusion laws do not mend the matter, though they lessen the number of cases. Education does not always change the masculine mind of Asiatics upon these subjects, although it often helps to do so. But one remedy has been found—Christianity ; and this remedy works as well in India as in China, and it is the only factor which accomplishes that end among these heathen in America.

The writer has studied this question of the social condition of the Chinese in America with an ever-saddening heart. The wider the view, the more extensive the acquaintance with the problem, the darker and more hopeless does it appear. I do not know if the wisest of legislative enactments can ever control it. The reformation seems to

require a complete change of mind on the part of these Oriental men, a thing which no statutes can bring about. It is only when the law of God is written on their hearts that they lift woman to her true place of honor and respect.

It is with the sincere hope that missionary activity among these people may be increased and every effort for their redemption be sustained and strengthened, both in our own land and in China, that this little volume is sent forth.

It is also with the further prayer, wrung from my heart by my own intimate knowledge of these dear women, that some even of these in America may be delivered from their sad bondage and a bit of earth's sweet happiness find its way into their sorrow-filled lives.

HELEN F. CLARK.

NEW YORK CITY.

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I

THE LADY OF THE LILY FEET

THE LADY OF THE LILY FEET

MEE LEE was looking anxiously from her third-story window. For three hours she had spent most of the time at this post of observation. Everything was in readiness. The floor was scrubbed until it was almost white. Indeed, the oil-cloth was beginning to wear through because of Mee Lee's perseverance in this line. The stove was as black as American polish put on by strong young hands could make it. There was no speck of dust to be seen. The lace curtains hung over the windows white and gleaming in their starched stiffness, and the brass chandeliers were ornamented with queer paper roses that Mee Lee had learned to make from the little Irish girl next door. On the table was spread a fine array of Chinese confections, preserved fish, sugared nuts and raisins, with the finest oranges California could produce. Fresh offerings, double the usual quantity, were placed before the household god on the altar fastened to the wall; and over in the restaurant a savory meal of rice, pig's feet, and Chinese vegetables, cooked with chopped meat and fish, was in preparation. Mee Lee herself wore a gorgeous jacket of purple silk trimmed with blue, and her feet were shod with a new pair of the round-soled slippers which, in Chinatown, were considered so very genteel.

The occasion of all this was the advent of a new mistress to the household. The old mistress had been sent back to China by the last steamer, and now a new one was expected every moment ; for Young Sing, Mee Lee's master, had gone to the dock to meet the incoming steamer some hours before. Mee Lee had not greatly regretted the departure of her old mistress, for she had received many beatings from that somewhat irascible person's hands. Perhaps the new mistress might be worse, Mee Lee reflected, but she certainly hoped for the best.

Just as the sun was beginning to sink Mee Lee heard a clatter far down the street, and stretching over the window-sill as far as the preservation of her balance would permit, she looked at the approaching carriage. A moment later it stopped directly in front of the house, and Mee Lee watched with anxious eyes and bated breath for the first appearance of that much-expected lady. The carriage door opened and Young Sing, in his gorgeous green silk jacket, alighted, leaving the door open for his new bride to follow him. There was a moment's hesitation and then a slender, shrinking figure, clad in dark silk, with a red shawl thrown over her head and hiding the bowed face, stepped slowly and with difficulty out to the pavement.

Mee Lee uttered a startled exclamation, in which admiration and awe were equally intermingled.

"Oh, she got de lily feet ! She got de lily feet !"

Clasping her hands with reverent wonder, she slipped down from the window and waited with bated breath at the head of the stairs, while the shrinking stranger made her slow progress upward. Young Sing, as masculine dig-

nity required, stalked on ahead, giving no heed to the toil of the tiny bound feet behind him.

Truth to tell, Young Sing was not entirely satisfied with his new wife. He had had two before. One was in China, and one he had sold. This latest acquisition he had purchased through a go-between in Hong Kong, who had magnified her beauty and her virtues until Young Sing had been induced to pay a large price for her ; and now when she had arrived, he found that she had come from a distant part of the province and spoke a dialect wholly foreign to his, so that to make her understand he was obliged to have recourse to broken English, a little of which she had learned in Hong Kong and on shipboard. Young Sing detested English, and had neither the desire nor the industry to learn it, so that his vocabulary was exceedingly limited. His business was gambling, pure and simple, and he had always been successful enough to give him plenty of money and a haughty spirit, which did not fail to reveal itself in the carriage of his head and his general deportment.

When the new wife had reached the little kitchen and stood leaning against the table for support, he watched silently while she slowly removed the covering that hid her face. A crowd of curious Chinese women gathered in the hall and watched expectantly, for all knew that Young Sing's number three wife had come at last.

Young Sing looked at her intently ; yes, so far as beauty was concerned she was a very good bargain, and even he was not unsusceptible to the charm of the softly rounded cheek, the delicately curved lip and the skin of exquisite texture. Her eyes too were large and luminous, and her

whole attitude and expression one of gentleness and pathetic timidity. But she was older than he supposed. She looked to be twenty-three at least, and certain sad lines around her mouth took from her expression the vivacity of even that age. The go-between had declared to him that she was only seventeen, and he particularly wanted a young wife, hence here was a second disappointment. But looking at her keenly, he reflected, "She no got fight. Got velly good face," and these were two good points in her favor. Then, without a word of greeting or of friendliness, he strode down the stairs and over to his "Company's" store. But the shrinking bride had not once raised her eyes, or looked upon the face of her bridegroom.

Mee Lee very quickly made the same discovery that her master had made, namely, that her mistress' Chinese was as foreign as Arabic to her. But English, such as Mee Lee possessed, was no difficulty to her.

"What you name?" she asked briskly.

"Ah Ling," slowly replied the bride.

"Where from you come?"

"Me come Kwong Fu."

"You got de lily feet. Me see!"

Mee Lee knelt reverently on the floor and lifted the tiny stump in her hand. It was scarcely three inches long and rested like a doll's foot in Mee Lee's palm.¹

¹I have a Chinese lady's slipper in my possession, given me by a woman who was making a pair like them for her own wear, and the sole measures one-sixteenth of an inch less than three inches in length, and the heel is one inch broad.



CHINESE WOMEN'S SHOES.

"See!" she called to the women who crowded around. "See de lovely lily feet! Oh, so little! Never see so little before! How old when make de feet?"

"Me four years. Me very small. But," she said with a timid glance, "me no likee now. Me likee big foot now. Can walkee more better. No can walk got lily feet."

"Oh!" exclaimed the women in disgust. "She no good, she not likee de lily feet."

The stranger shrank back at this rebuke, but Mee Lee answered nothing. She put the little foot down very gently and brought the stranger something to eat.

As the days passed by Mee Lee and her mistress grew to be close friends. The one was too gentle to oppress her servant, and the other too affectionately attentive to grieve or annoy her mistress. Young Sing seemed to be only partially satisfied with his new bride, but household affairs ran along with comparative smoothness. The neighbor women soon found that "Som Ni," as they called her, meaning "Wife Number Three," was not quarrelsome, that she never cheated at dominoes, and was always generous in sharing any delicacy she might have. So they liked her well enough, although she was too retiring to be exactly popular.

Mee Lee secretly resented the name "Som Ni," although she was entirely familiar with her master's previous matrimonial ventures. She scorned to call this lady of the lovely lily feet by this disrespectful sobriquet of "Third Wife," and herself always spoke of her either as Mrs. Sing, in American style, or else she called her with affectionate abandon, "Me Mama."

There were three things that contributed to make Ah Ling the most remarkable lady in Chinatown: her beauty, her exceptionally small feet, and her exquisite needlework. She was an adept in embroidery, and could make any sort of handkerchief or shawl, covering them with flowers of bright hue worked so as to look exactly alike on both sides. All these awoke the admiration and awe of the entire colony, and Young Sing was looked upon as a remarkably lucky man since he owned so valuable a piece of property. But Ah Ling was not permitted to embroider in America. Making buttonholes for Chinese jackets paid much better; so all day long Ah Ling and Mee Lee sat on opposite sides of the table, with the flaming gas jet between them on cloudy days, and sewed the long slender cords which form both the button and the buttonhole on the Celestial's jackets. Thus they fully earned their cost to their regal lord and provided a comfortable surplus for him at the end of the year besides. For the money did not come to them, but was collected annually from the tailors by the husband just before the Chinese New Year.

There were two gala days in the week for Mee Lee. They were the days when the teacher from the mission came to give her a lesson from an English primer, and great was her joy and industry when she sat poring over the little thumb-marked book. Her progress in reading and writing was excellent, but her speech always reflected the dialect of the foreigners about them, and never lost its peculiar Chinese-American idioms. Mee Lee also learned some other things from her teacher that did not quite please Ah Ling and their neighboring countrywomen. For



MEE LEE

instance, when this otherwise exemplary servant went to light the joss sticks before the household god at five o'clock in the afternoon she was very apt to laugh, and quite shocked Ah Ling several times. Once she even went so far as to turn up her nose at the picture of the idol and declared derisively :

"He no good, he only paper god. Jesus-god more better."

"Mee Lee!" cried Ah Ling in dismay, "he sendee you velly bad luck you laugh at him." Mee Lee laughed the louder. "He sendee bad luck? How he sendee bad luck? He only paper. He no can see. Got ears, he no can hear. See!" She caught up a grain of rice from the offering on the altar, and with intentional impertinence flung it directly under his nose. Ah Ling screamed with fear, but the pictured face gazed down as calmly as before.

Mee Lee desisted, but said quietly, "Jesus-god alive. He muchee more better. He too muchee good. Take care Mee Lee every day. Give Mee Lee velly good mamma," and she stooped down and patted the little feet of her mistress with passionate affection.

Then with the boisterous fun of a happy girl, she dropped beside her chair, drumming with her fingers as she had seen her teacher play the piano at the mission, and began to sing at the top of her voice,

Jesus loves me, this I know.

Ah Ling, shocked yet laughing, caught up a stick and slyly rapped the merry fingers until Mee Lee left off her mischief and ran back to her sewing.

And so the pleasant weeks passed until a full year had slipped by, and Mee Lee was old enough to be married. Then came the hour so momentous, oftentimes so tragic, in the Chinese woman's life. Ah Ling first broke the news to her.

"Young Sing say you too muchee big gal now. Some Chinaman talkee takee you get mallied."¹

Mee Lee flushed scarlet to the very roots of her jet black hair.

"One Chinaman talkee velly good house. Buy de good carpet, buy de chair, buy de table, buy de dish, an' all samee Melican bed. Give de too muchee good clo's, an' de rings an' de bracelets. Young Sing say velly good."

But Mee Lee was still dumb.

"Young Sing say you velly good gal, can sew little, got muchee good face, can cook de rice. Young Sing say givee you two, tlee muchee good jackets, an' de bracelets an' de rings."

The color had slowly faded from Mee Lee's face, and her fingers had grown cold. At last the question throbbing in her heart rose to her pale lips.

"Dis Chinaman—he—he—Clistian² man?"

Ah Ling looked at her with startled wonder.

"No, he not Clistian. Maybe he be Clistian, China-gods givee bad luck. Givee velly bad luck Clistian man."

Mee Lee's face fell. Little romancing is allowed a Chinese girl. She does not see her bridegroom until the marriage rites are celebrated. She cannot hope for love, nor give love in return, when neither has beheld the other's face. The most she can hope for is that something less

¹ Married.

² Christian.

than aversion may fill her breast when she knows the man who has bought and married her. And Mee Lee was not foolish enough to indulge any romantic fancies. But one thing she had longed for with all the strength of her passionate young heart, and that was that her husband might be a Christian man. The Christian men did not sell their wives, nor take away their children. Then too, most surprising of all, Mee Lee had been told confidentially that the Christian men never took but one wife, not because they were too poor, but because the Jesus-book would not let them. But of this Mee Lee did not dare to be sure. It sounded too good to be true. But oh! Never to be sold! Mee Lee had clasped her hands to her heart in an ecstasy of joy as she had contemplated so blessed a future. And now her hopes were all blasted! Young Sing was going to sell her to only a heathen man. Great tears fell slowly down on her little cold fingers, and convulsive sobs shook her from head to foot.

Ah Ling looked frightened.

"Why for you cry? Why for 'fraid? Nobody can hurt. He velly good man. He no hurt."

"Maybe he takee me go sell some day. Clistian man no sellee," was the sad answer.

Ah Ling sank back in her chair, and passed her slender hand over her face. Before her eyes she saw again her childhood's home, her mother and the young brothers she had loved so much. And then the hour of parting came back to her memory, when for a few hundred cash¹ she was sold into a stranger's hand, and sold and sold again until she

¹ The "cash" is the Chinese coin.

was at last a lonely waif on a foreign shore, separated forever from all that she had once held dear. And she could not answer Mee Lee.

The next day six gorgeous jackets arrived from the "Company's" store, and Mee Lee was made resplendent for her betrothal ceremonies, which were soon to take place. She had hidden her disappointment under the stoicism of her race, and went about her preparations patiently, if not gladly. But still there was some lingering hope that this man who had bought her might be one of the progressive sort of Chinese who wore American clothes, and had put on also a few American ideas as to the education and position of women.

She did not know any such men, but she had heard of them. She was therefore curious as to the appearance and *personnel* of her bridegroom, a knowledge usually forbidden to the Chinese bride as immodest and entirely unnecessary.

One day she placed her cheek close against Ah Ling's, and whispered softly :

"Ah Ling, me want somet'ing velly bad. You givee sure?"

"What you want?" asked Ah Ling cautiously.

"You givee? Tellee me sure you givee."

"Maybe me givee."

"All light. Some day Chinaman me mally by and by looker in store window, maybe walkee down stleet, you tellee me? No, you no tellee for sure. Jus' say, 'Mee Lee, one man looker in window,' or maybe you say, 'one man got de long queue,' or 'got de Melican shoe'; me no look long. Jus' one minute me looker, dat's all."

Ah Ling looked very grave, and made no answer, but Mee Lee felt that her request was not denied.

The day before her betrothal supper Ah Ling, who was near the window, suddenly called softly :

“Mee Lee, one man by lamp-post. Got Melican hat.”

Mee Lee sprang to the window, hiding behind the lace curtain, her little heart beating with excitement. She saw a tall, rather slender man, dressed in a Chinese jacket of dark blue with American trousers, shoes, and hat. But a long queue hung down his back, and his carriage lacked the life and energy of the Americanized man. She could not see his face, only the long profile and two thin hands clasped behind him.

She was again disappointed. This man was neither the one thing nor the other, and she could not conjecture the future that awaited her. She went through the betrothal supper, the week of seclusion following, and the long and complex ceremonies of the marriage with an unmoved face, but with no joy or gladness at her heart.

She donned her wedding dress, the red robe of beauty and good fortune, and threw over her head the embroidered red silk bridal veil, and bade her mistress good-bye with a sob of genuine pain at parting, and went forth in the carriage to her husband's home in another street. And here we must leave her for a time.

Ah Ling was very lonely when Mee Lee had left her. The young girl's attachment had been sincere, and Ah Ling had been happier than at any time during those long years since she had been torn from her childhood's home. No little babe had come to comfort her lonely heart, or fill

her long day with loving cares. Hour after hour she sat patiently sewing at her table, or painfully hobbling about on her bound feet over her household duties. The teacher who had come to teach Mee Lee now came sometimes to see Ah Ling, and this gave the lonely woman some fresh material for reflection during her almost solitary labor. True, her Chinese neighbors came in sometimes to see her, and on other days she was asked into their rooms; but she never went from her own floor in the tenement, nor caught a breath of the throbbing life of the great city about her. She scarcely dared to look down from her window into the busy street below, and never by any means went out under the blue sky to breathe the great Maker's fresh air, or bask under the life-giving rays of his sun. All this seclusion was enjoined by Chinese decorum and custom, and for her to have done otherwise would have been to make herself a subject of gossip and of contemptuous comment, and few Chinese women had the courage to face this, even though they felt the custom to be wrong and foolish.

Ah Ling often engaged her own attention by sacrifices to her god. She had brought with her from China her own special deity, Ah Nye, the goddess of mercy. The little image was about four inches high, cut out of bamboo wood and painted in bright colors. Its face was now partly worn away with Ah Ling's kisses and caresses, and with the kisses and caresses of the votaries who had owned it before her. To gain favor with the god Ah Ling had made a little Chinese hood which covered the head and face of the image, and hung down to its heels in the back. She chose bits of her brightest silk for this, and sewed it with many



AH LING AS WIFE.

a Chinese Ah Ling could not understand. He showed her lily feet, he revealed her softly rounded arm, he dilated on her delicate face, while Ah Ling shrank back with pitiful pleading and blinding tears. "Oh, no sell Ah Ling, Young Sing. No sellee me!" she cried.

But he made no answer, only continued his talk to the other, whose vicious and hardened face struck an awful terror into the heart of the timid woman.

"Oh, no sell Ah Ling, Young Sing! No sellee me!" she repeated again, catching his arm with her shaking hands. "Me velly good wife. Me sew, me cook, me clean de house; oh, no sellee me, Young Sing."

He shook her off angrily.

"Oh, Young Sing, you killee me. Oh, no sell! no sell!" Her cry died away into a sharp wail as the men left the room, and she fell in a shivering, sobbing heap on the floor. All night she wept and moaned and prayed to her goddess. She burned the joss sticks incessantly, and put a great bowl heaped full of rice before the tiny image. But no help came in her terrible sorrow, and no peace calmed her agonized heart.

The next day Mee Lee's teacher came to see her, and wondered at the swollen eyes and piteous lips, but to all her questions Ah Ling answered nothing of the truth. She was afraid of the "Clistian" teacher, and feared to utter a word of her trouble. The teacher saw the image and its huge offering upon the table, and finally said very gently:

"That wooden god cannot help you, Ah Ling. Why do you not pray to the Jesus-god. He can hear you, and he loves you, and is your friend,"

"De Jesus-god love de China-woman?" asked Ah Ling in surprise.

"Certainly he does. Before he came into the world all women were oppressed as you are to-day, but the religion he taught lifted up woman out of her sad condition and placed her in her present place as you see her in this country. The Lord Jesus loves all women, and is always tender and merciful to them."

Ah Ling listened in amazement. "It is because Jesus honored them that now all Christian men honor women, and do not sell them in this country as they do in yours, but women are as free here as are the men. Will you not pray to Jesus hereafter? He will surely hear you and answer you."

When the teacher had gone Ah Ling pondered much over the words, but not yet did they find full entrance into her heart.

Chinatown was a place of complex life. Business places seemed mixed up inseparably with joss altars and gambling dens. Bachelor apartments abounded, but some examples of Chinese family life also existed. Schools were just beginning to make headway among them, and some missionary enterprises were struggling against the heathen darkness which prevailed everywhere. American ideas of the utilitarian class gained some ground, but American ideas of the moral side of life were not easily assimilated. Hence it was that evils, not unknown also among Americans, flourished like rank weeds in a neglected garden.

Vallejo Street was the scene of the worst of these evils. Here house after house hid behind its half-closed shutters

painted faces and sin-corrupted lips, which should have been closed away from human sight forever. "Vallee" Street, as the Chinese called it, was but a synonym for vice and degradation, and good men and women uttered the word only with loathing, while the outside world looked upon it as oracular proof that the whole Chinese race was all that human beings ought not to be.

Ah Ling lived through two days of heart-breaking suspense and deadly fear. She tried to allay these fears, but every instinct told her that Young Sing was against her, and that neither cries nor entreaties would avail to change his mind. When he came in that night she stood before him, showing her little bound feet, twisting her delicate hands in appeal, while she poured out her persuasions and entreaties.

"Oh, Young Sing, what for sell? What me do? Me do anyt'ing you tellee. Me sew, me sew all de night you no sellee. Oh, no sell, Young Sing. No sell!"

But he paid no heed to her words.

"Me come China all samee your wife. You no tellee go-between you takee me go sell. You say all samee your Number One wife. How can tell? Me come for wife."

Still he was silent.

"Oh, no go sell. Killee me go sell be bad woman. Oh, no, no! No sell, Young Sing, no sell!"

She sank down at his feet, clasping them in her entreaty and showering them with her flowing tears. He pushed her rudely away and went angrily into his room.

That night a carriage came, and they carried Ah Ling to "Vallee" Street.

Months later a crowd of excited women gathered in a hall were talking to a messenger: "You go tell Mee Lee her mamma velly sick. Velly sick all samee die. You tell she go Vallee Stleet two months. Young Sing sell Ah Ling down "Vallee" Stleet one bad man. He name Sow Mon. He velly bad man. Why for he sell go down 'Vallee' Stleet? That not nice. That velly bad. Now Ah Ling all samee die. You go tellee Mee Lee, Young Sing too muchee bad man."

The messenger sped on her way.

Mee Lee sat by an open window sewing endless button-holes on an endless pile of jackets. Her little home looked clean and comfortable, and if her marriage had not proved all she had desired it to be, yet no great trouble had confronted her and she looked quietly contented as the messenger broke in upon her with the startling tidings that Ah Ling had been sold and was very ill.

Mee Lee listened, dumfounded. Her beloved mistress, her lady of the lily feet, her "mamma," in "Vallee" Street! As the whole dreadful truth dawned on her she grew white and stern, while a terrible anger took possession of her. Her mamma in "Vallee" Street!

With scarcely a word to the messenger she locked her door, and bareheaded, clad only in her house jacket of blue cloth with the black trousers, she made her way to "Vallee" Street, and entered Sow Mon's house. The girl at the door looked at her in surprise.

"Me come see me mamma," said Mee Lee with unbending brows. "Me see me mamma got de lily feet."

The servant girl showed the way to an upper room. On

a rude bed lay the slender figure, wasted with grief and sickness. Mee Lee's arms were about her, and Mee Lee's hot tears were falling over her face before she scarcely saw her visitor.

Then the joy proved almost more than she could bear, and convulsive sobs shook her from head to foot. She was very weak and at times could scarcely speak, but with an effort she said at last :

"Why for me come Vallee Stleet? Me no wantee. Me play de gods killee Ah Ling every day. Oh, why for Ah Ling no die?"

Mee Lee's face grew dark.

"Me play¹ Ah Nye all time savee me go Vallee Stleet. Ah Nye-god no hear. Me go allee same. Now me play Jesus-god. One time teacher tellee me Jesus-god allee same lovee China-woman, no let hurtee China-woman. Me play Jesus-god every day now."

"De Jesus-god more better," said Mee Lee.

"Me no wantee come Vallee Stleet. Young Sing sellee me one bad man, me no can help. Oh, why for Ah Ling no die?"

"Maybe one Clistian teacher takee you go good housie, you go Ah Ling?" asked Mee Lee.

"Oh, me go sure. Me no likee Vallee Stleet. Oh, takee me go good housie. Oh, why for Ah Ling no die?"

At that moment the door opened and a Chinaman's dark, sinister face came toward them. Ah Ling uttered a despairing cry and hid her face in the bedclothes, while Mee Lee, terrified, slipped away to the street and sped home.

¹ Pray.

Here, without loss of time, she made a careful toilet. She oiled her hair and put in its choicest ornaments. She donned her handsomest silk jacket, then, unattended, she got into a carriage and drove to the mission house. It was early evening when she arrived, and the shades were down and few pedestrians were passing, which was all the better for Mee Lee.

She rang the bell and entered the pleasant parlor, to be greeted wonderingly by her beloved teacher.

"My dear Mee Lee, what has happened to bring you to see me?"

"Me come velly bad business. Me mamma velly sick. Young Sing sell me mamma go down Vallee Steet."

"What! Go to Vallejo Street? They told me he had sent her back to China."

"No go China. Young Sing sell velly bad man, Sow Mon, down Vallee Steet. Me mamma velly sick. Allee samee die. You go? You take Ah Ling to good housie?"

"Will she come here? Does she want to come here?"

"Yeh, she likee come too muchee. You go getee too quick? Maybe she plitty soon die."

"Yes, we'll get an officer and go at once."

Mee Lee returned to her home. An hour later, a stalwart policeman bore a wasted woman with tiny bound feet down a dark stairway. But they did not take her easily. With difficulty they found her, and only by blows and force did they obtain possession of her. And when they drove her in the carriage through the streets of Chinatown, they were followed by a howling mob of maddened Chinese. But they reached the mission house and placed her safely

within its doors. Then they guarded the door and held back the furious mob all night.

But Ah Ling, with a look of peace on her gentle face, lay with clasped hands in a safe bed, and thanked the tender Jesus-god for her wonderful deliverance.

II

MEE LEE'S GREAT HAPPINESS

MEE LEE'S GREAT HAPPINESS

MEE LEE had been married about a month when it dawned upon Ing John, her husband, that the household gods were not receiving the attention due to them. He had set up a shelf at one side of the room, and built a miniature pagoda above it, inside of which was a China statuette of one of the most popular gods now worshiped in certain parts of China, said to be the god of Good Fortune, who was believed to always prosper the business ventures of those who put their trust in him.

In a well-ordered Chinese household a dish of rice should be placed before the gods every day and a little wine should be drunk in their honor, and at five o'clock in the afternoon joss sticks should be burned before them. But as time went on Ing John became sensible that the only offerings given to these gods were the ones which his own hands had placed there.

"Why do you not offer to the gods?" he asked Mee Lee one day, in the musical cadence of their native tongue.

"Because those gods are of no value," Mee Lee replied. "They are stone, and can be easily broken. They are not so strong as you are. You, a man, are more powerful than they."

Ing John looked at his china image reflectively for some time.

"Then I will buy the wooden god, which is stronger and which you cannot break."

"A wooden god you can burn, or you can break it with your axe, and it cannot cry or scream. Nor can it suffer any pain, as you would do. A wooden god is not so great as the man who worships it."

Ing John looked at his wife in amazement.

"The god not so great as the man? Why these are the great gods, the Wo Hop gods! Do they not give the good fortune? Who should not worship them, the great, the Wo Hop gods?"

"There is one God who is greater than these gods. He is greater than you, a man. He can give life or death. He can kill or make alive. He has made the world, and has put you, the man, upon it. And he has made the sun, and the moon, and the stars."

"What god is that?"

"That is the Jesus-god."

Ing John's brows grew dark. In an instant he comprehended his wife's apostasy from her father's religion, and his anger was hot. He strode through the room and dealt her a blow across the face. "I will beat you every day if you do not put the incense before the gods," he said.

"You can beat me," replied Mee Lee without a sign of emotion save a wave of deep color that mounted to her brow and burned there, deeper even than the red tinge the blow had brought to her cheek.

"You will not worship my gods?" Ing John was furious now. "I will make you worship them, or I will beat you every day."

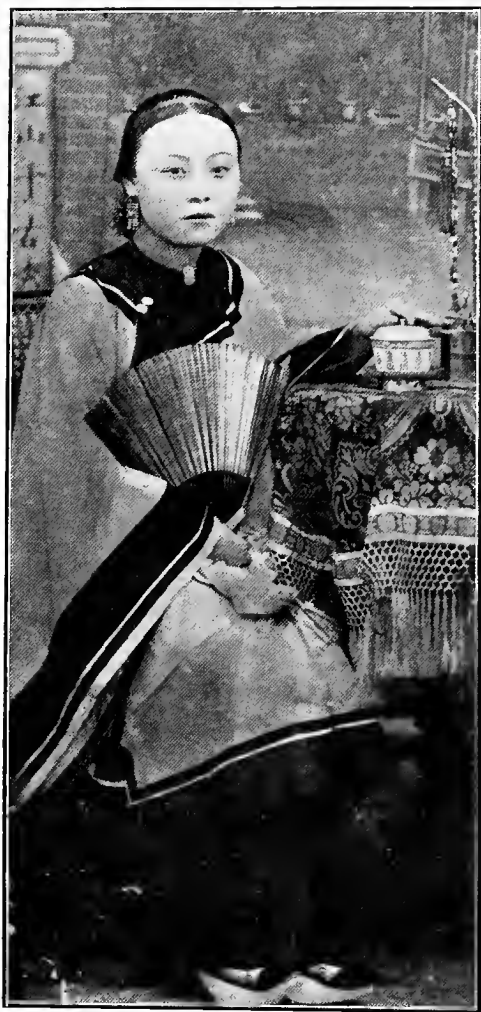
"When the god can come down and eat the rice I will give it to him," said Mee Lee.

Once more the man looked at her in sheer amazement, and the words went home to his conscience in spite of his anger. He went out, but the demeanor of his wife troubled him, and her singular words returned often to his memory. He did not fulfill his promise to beat her daily, but he took especial pains to himself place the offerings and the incense before his idols, so as to ward off their anger over his wife's neglect.

Ing John was not a bad husband. He provided well for his wife's needs, and was fairly kind to her. He did not enjoy domestic dissensions, and was given to overlooking some things rather than to disturb his own peace of mind. Thus he endured Mee Lee's neglect of the gods rather than to quarrel with her continually. He even gave a lazy assent to her occasional visits from the mission teacher, and was rather proud than otherwise over her ability to read and understand English. He himself knew more of the American tongue than most of his neighbors, but he could not read or write as could Mee Lee. Sometimes he received letters from American business houses, and once he was highly gratified when he found that Mee Lee replied to a letter at his dictation in quite intelligible style. But when that memorable day came on which Mee Lee visited Ah Ling in "Vallee" Street, these pleasant relations ceased, and Ing John hired a schoolboy who was half-Chinese, to write his English letters for him. On that day also a change came over the young wife, a change much more sad and tragic. The fears that haunted

her before her marriage returned again. Would Ing John ever sell her? And could he be so cruel as to sell her as Young Sing had sold his lady of the lily feet? As this terrible doubt of her husband rose in her heart Mee Lee came to a resolve—a resolve as relentless and sad as her nature was determined and from which her religion, but imperfectly comprehended, did not save her. Before night she had acted upon this resolve, and from that hour on there hung concealed in the folds of her gown a tiny vial whose contents meant safety from dishonor in this world, whatever of eternal loss they might bring in the world to come.

In a few hours after Ah Ling's tumultuous rescue, it was known throughout Chinatown that Ing John's wife had told the missionaries where to find her. Great was the indignation against Ing John. A meeting of the "Company's" council was quickly called, and Ing John was summoned before them. He was violently rebuked for his lax discipline, and for the fact that his wife was a Christian. In vain he pleaded that in Mee Lee's case the harm had been done before he married her, and that therefore Young Sing was to blame, and that he himself had been deceived. He was sharply reminded that a few beatings would bring his wife to submission, and that he was accordingly held responsible for Sow Mon's loss; and that angry individual demanded that Ing John reimburse him the three thousand dollars which he had paid for the beautiful Ah Ling. The discussion lasted almost all night, and was no nearer settlement at the end than at the beginning. But late as it was, when Ing John finally sought his home, Mee Lee still



MEE LEE AS A CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

sat at her sewing, although the first gleams of the morning sun were streaming across her table and struggling with the feeble flicker of the gas light.

When Mee Lee had returned from the Mission House she knew full well what to expect as the consequence of her rash action. To have herself given the information that should cost a countryman three thousand dollars was an offense absolutely beyond pardon in the eyes of the general Chinese public, and to have interfered with a man's natural right to dispose of his wife as he pleased was an outrage which no masculine temper could be expected to brook. All this was present in the mind of this set-faced, seventeen-year-old wife, as she stood at her window, still robed in her rich silken jacket, and waited with throbbing pulse for the *dénouement*. An hour had not passed after she had reached her home again before a noise of horse's hoofs and confused shouts was heard in the direction of "Vallee" Street, and a carriage with its burden of stalwart officers and a blanket-wrapped woman had dashed by, while a mob of howling men had rushed after it. Yet, with all this before her eyes, as she again sat at her sewing, Mee Lee did not fear; or rather a deep, unspeakable peace in her heart superseded all fear.

But when Ing John came in the early morning his anger was terrible. He commanded her to stand up before him. She did so, pale, but still, while it seemed to her the peace in her heart was turning to a soft song of joy, and she could hear it singing within her, even though she knew all Ing John's fury toward her.

"You do not worship the gods. You go to believe the Christian gods. You disgrace your fathers and your fathers' house. You became a snare to me to bring me to shame and ruin before all the gods and my people. You are a curse and a contempt to me," he said.

And then he beat her, furiously, mercilessly.

And when he was done, Mee Lee lay still, where she had fallen, and looked up into the streaming sunbeams wonderingly, for surely she had not been alone. Surely One stood there in the room with her. She could almost make out the gleam of wondrous light about him, could almost see the incomparable face of the Majesty from on high. And she did not grieve. She could not, for that peace was singing in her heart so sweetly, so joyously, ere she knew it her bleeding lips parted in a smile, and her weak fingers clasped rapturously over her breast.

About this time Ing John embarked upon a new business venture. He and some cousins owned a small importing business. They annually brought from China about twenty thousand dollars' worth of preserved meats, fruits, and vegetables, which they sold again to their countrymen at a small margin of profit. Ing John's share of the capital was about three thousand dollars. Now there was a certain kind of fish that was especially delightful to the Chinese palate. These fish were sent to the American market in a dried state, which took from them the delicate flavor of their natural condition. Ing John long meditated some better way of preserving this fish. Finally he decided that it could be canned as the Americans canned their own salmon and sardines. So Ing John, but imperfectly informed of the

American process, sent home his directions and some sample cans of the salmon, and ordered his favorite fish to be prepared in this manner and sent to him.

Now, as every loyal Chinaman did, Ing John sought the advice of his god before he undertook this venture. Going to the temple he made the customary offering of incense and rice before the grim-faced paper god, who hung between the brilliant red panels at the back of the shrine, and then cast the divining sticks into the air. He plainly asked the question of his god if this venture should or should not prove successful. The augury was favorable, and Ing John felt gratified; but to make assurance doubly sure, he again cast the sticks, asking the same question. The answer was again highly favorable. Ing John now asked if he should invest as much as five hundred dollars in it, and the augury showed a high degree of approval. Ing John was willing to make all the money he could, so he cast once more, and asked if he should invest one thousand dollars. This proposition also was approved. But yet again did Ing John try, and suggested another five hundred dollars of investment, and now the sticks showed promise of the greatest degree of prosperity of which they were capable. With great elation Ing John sent his order across the Pacific, and six months later the consignment arrived.

It had not reached the door when they were made rudely aware of its presence. Passers-by were holding their noses, and the truckman was indulging in language not at all to his credit. Ing John hastened to unload, although the task nearly made him sick, and one opened can settled the

business forever. Another good ten-dollar bill was consumed in getting that pile of cans into the river, and then Ing John gave himself up to bitter reflection. Why had his god so deceived him? For the first time in his life he was angry with his god. It seemed so unjustifiable, and when he went into the joss house and looked his deity squarely in the eyes, that paper face seemed to leer at him, and Ing John turned away with loathing and hatred in his heart. He even complained of it to a cousin of his, Moy Den, who was a Christian, and bitterly accused the Wo Hop of unfeeling deceit. But Moy Den only laughed, and told him that the Wo Hop were no gods at all, only man's imagination. Then Moy Den began a discourse that Ing John never forgot, and ended at last by pulling a New Testament out of his pocket and making Ing John read it. Before the evening was over, Ing John had borrowed the book and carried it to his store for careful perusal.

The months dragged slowly by to Mee Lee, yet they were not unhappy months, for the peace "that passeth understanding" remained with the solitary girl and comforted her. On the table beside her an English book was always lying—the Book of books; and in its life-giving pages Mee Lee drank continually from the source of all life and joy.

Her calm patience disquieted Ing John. He could not understand it. Had she cried out under his chastisements he would have been satisfied with the righteousness of his course. But this still patience seemed supernatural to him, and left him with a feeling of guilt, almost of fear, which he could not shake off.

This feeling was curiously confirmed in him when their baby came—a girl. Most Chinese women would have bewailed the birth of a girl, looking upon her as contemptuously as men did, and would have felt that the gods had deserted them ; but Mee Lee did not do so. She seemed almost glad when she knew that her baby was a girl, and took the little one to her heart as if she were the most precious gift her God could have given her. When Ing John expostulated with her for this, Mee Lee only answered, “If the Jesus-god gave me a boy he would worship your devil-gods. But I am glad he gave me a girl, for she will worship the Jesus-god.”

“Why will the girl worship the Jesus-god?” asked the heathen husband.

“Because the girl has much trouble. The tears are in her heart all the days of her life. Only the Jesus-god loves the China-woman. Therefore she worships the Jesus-god.”

Ing John's awakened conscience smote him again, and he went out with a troubled face.

When the baby was four months old a wonderful thing happened, Ah Ling came to see her. She did not come alone, but two ladies from the Mission House came with her. Oh, what a happy afternoon that was!

How Ah Ling hugged the baby, and held her in her arms all the afternoon, and would not let her go! And how fast the happy tongues chattered! Then too, Ah Ling showed her feet to Mee Lee, now unbound, and insisted on crossing the room again and again just to let Mee Lee see how well she could walk. At first Mee Lee found it a little hard to reconcile herself to the sacrifice of the wonderful

"lily feet," but being a philosophical little person, she soon accepted the change, and admitted that it was much better for Ah Ling. But before the afternoon had passed, another wonderful thing happened, which so surprised Mee Lee that she almost fainted in her chair. It was this, and it was told her by her teacher :

"Mee Lee, I have some very good news for you. Do you know that Ing John has been coming to our mission ever since your dear little baby was born? And to-day he told our missionary preacher, Li Sue, that he has been converted, and that he now worships the Jesus-god just as you do."

Ah, Mee Lee, what can express the feelings of your heart now? Nothing but tears, nothing but happy, happy tears. And bending her face on the table, Mee Lee gave vent to that relieving flood until the sharp tension of the sudden joy had given way.

"Me so glad, so glad," she said. "Me pray every day me get married. Me pray all the time Ing John be by and by Clistian man. Oh, me so glad, so glad!"

That night Ing John came in just as baby had fallen asleep, and while she was still in her mother's arms. There was a look on his face that Mee Lee had never seen there before. When he came in he went deliberately over to his idol altar, and with blow after blow he broke it into splinters and crushed the china god into shining bits beneath his feet. The baby woke with the noise, but with a joyous song Mee Lee stilled her again, and then with the wrecked idol still on the floor, Ing John took his Bible and sat down before Mee Lee and read aloud. When he had done reading he

prayed, and Mee Lee knew that all the heart-change she had desired had come to pass in him. Then he rose from his knees, and coming over to his wife he stooped down and kissed her, and that moment there was born in their hearts the true love that can alone make the marriage tie all that the Almighty meant it to be.

"I have beaten you many times," said he, "but now the Jesus-god has put light into my heart, I will beat you no more." And he folded her in his arms.

In the night Mee Lee crept from her bed. All sleep had gone from her eyes because of this great joy. She went and stood by her window and looked up into the blessed sky. With her eyes on those fair stars she thanked her God with a heart so full that she could not speak all its fullness, and she whispered again and again :

"Ing John never sell Mee Lee now. Never sell now. And baby girl safe too ; baby girl safe too. Oh, thank the blessed Jesus-god forever !"

III

JOY COME



HAPPY JOY COME.

JOY COME

JOY COME had the biggest, roundest black eyes in Chinatown. But there was one thing very unusual about Joy Come's eyes. Everybody noticed it. They were always laughing. You could not by any means look down into Joy Come's two big eyes and not break into a smile yourself. They were like dancing sunlight on rippling water. But her little red lips smiled as incessantly as her great black eyes, for her temper was usually as sunny as her face.

Do you think her name a strange one? "Joy Come" is the nearest English equivalent to the curious Chinese syllables which I can find. Perhaps I ought to spell it Joi Kum, but no one, looking into that little laughing face, could have it in his heart for a moment to put so sweet a name into such an uncouth form. "Joy Come" is she, and may Love grant she always may be!

At the opening of this story Joy Come was a tiny maiden of six years, and lived on the top floor of a tenement in one of the most populous streets of Chinatown. She wore Chinese jackets of bright red or green, or sometimes of purple trimmed with blue, and funny little embroidered pants. She also wore Chinese slippers with round, wooden soles, when she could not possibly avoid it. Joy Come did not

like round-soled slippers. She could not dance and play half so well in the kindergarten when she had to balance herself all the time to keep from tumbling over.

Her black hair was neatly shaved for about three inches all around the crown of her head, and the rest of it was gathered to the right side and braided with a heavy bunch of red silk cords into a long queue which hung entrancingly down her back.

Joy Come and Chun Lon were fast friends. To be sure Chun Lon was sixteen years old, and could read Joy Come's primer all the way through; but her superior knowledge had not made her proud. Besides, Joy Come's broader experience of life outside the tenement house made Chun Lon almost humble before her tiny friend.

Does this seem strange? It would not to one knowing the Chinese customs. Little girls and young women of this race would not be thought modest if they did not remain always in their own narrow living rooms. Chun Lon had only been down in the street once in a whole year, and that was when they went to make the customary New Year's visit to their cousin Hong Chy. So that with each passing month Chun Lon looked out from her little windows upon the great world outside with ever-growing wonder.

But Joy Come was a maid of different mold. She loved the sunshine as the flowers do, and fresh cool breezes were as the elixir of life to her. Joy Come would not stay in the tenement house, but with a persistence and strength of will so often a characteristic of her race she daily sought the street, and all her "cousin's" stores, as well as her ac-

quaintances' homes. Had she not been the very pink of propriety in all she did this would not have been allowed. But Joy Come's flawless behavior as well as her laughing eyes overcame all prejudices and proscriptions, and the merry maid went and came at her own sweet will.

Joy Come's mother was Dong Ho, a widow, under the control of her heathen brother-in-law, Ship Sing. Upon Dong Ho all the shadows of the midnight seemed to have fallen, and her face was as sad as Joy Come's was bright. Her eyes had shed tears till there seemed to be none left to shed, and her lips had not smiled in all the years of her womanhood. Persecutions had been her unvaried portion from her cradle, and suffering the one companion that never left her. Dong Ho was born in China, and being the second daughter in the family she was very unwelcome, and was considered a burden from the beginning. When she was five years old she became a victim to the cruel custom of footbinding. Each toe, except the great toe, was pulled out of joint, the nail wrenched off, and the mutilated stumps were bent under against the sole of the feet and bound there. Months and months were spent upon the bed or upon the floor, while the terrible agony never ceased, until at last the poor, bound feet were so benumbed and dead that she could begin to bear her weight upon them. When she was eight years old she was able to walk again, though only for a short distance without resting. At this time some missionaries came to live in their city, and to little Dong Ho's delight they settled in the house next door to her own. Then a children's school was opened, and two kind foreign ladies came and asked

permission for Dong Ho to attend. Being only a worthless girl, the permission was given, and for one whole year Dong Ho drank in the Christian teaching, till a new light was kindled in her dark and saddened soul, a light which never went out during all those heart-breaking years which followed. For Dong Ho became a Christian, and from the hour of her conversion she never worshiped an idol or acknowledged any god but the one true God of heaven. This occasioned great persecution. Her mother was furiously angry when little Dong Ho would not bow down to the kitchen-god, nor worship the tablet of her ancestors. Beatings and punishments fell hard and fast upon the unfortunate child, but her steadfast little spirit never wavered. She bore it all without complaint, for while her face grew sadder and more sad, living joy in her soul sustained her through it all.

And then a passing slave-trader saw her one day, and noted her graceful figure and clear, soft voice; for a few hundred cash he bought her, and carried her away down the river to one of the great coast cities.

Here Dong Ho was taught to sing, and would soon have been sent to one of the public gardens by her vicious owner, but she fell sick and grew more weak each day, until her fresh beauty was gone, and her owner sold her again in disgust. This time she went to a woman to be a servant, and for three years more she was in hard bondage. Her work seemed never to cease. Day and night, night and day, she must always work, with scarcely any time to sleep, and so little food to eat that she was always hungry. As she bent over her ceaseless tasks the tears fell uncon-

sciously from her eyes, and unnoticed sighs came with every breath.

And then she was sold again. A man who was going to America, Ship Sing, wanted to take over a wife to his brother, so he came and looked at Dong Ho, and that afternoon the bargain was completed. A week later she was on board a great ocean steamship and was crossing the Pacific Ocean.

There were none but strangers around her, and but few of her own nationality. But the strange customs of the foreigners frightened her more than the strangers themselves. The constant intermingling of men and women was particularly shocking to her. She had never seen so many men before in her life, and she could not grow used to it all, and was more desolate and sad than ever. In San Francisco she was married. Her husband, Dock Yee, proved to be an old man, whose heathenism had not been cured in any degree by his long residence in America. He approved her small feet and pretty face, but punished her for not worshipping the idols. Blows and revilings were still her lot, and the sad lines in her face never relaxed.

After a time they moved to New York, and now Dong Ho found again a Christian mission, and confided the secret of her faith to the missionaries. Here she found some comfort, for the foreign teachers often visited her and strove to bring into her hard life as much brightness as possible. Then bright-eyed Joy Come came into the world, and filled the hungry heart full of tenderest mother-love.

The father was displeased that his child was a girl, but the mother cared little, save that she foresaw the trials

which might fall to the girl child's lot. But Dong Ho determined to avert them if possible, and from the beginning she sought to make her daughter's life all that her own had not been. Love and caresses were bestowed on the little one lavishly, till the sunshine of happiness seemed always in the childish face, and even her father's harsh temper was softened by it.

When just old enough to talk in an amusing mixture of Chinese and English, little Joy Come was taken to the mission kindergarten, and her earliest impressions were emphatically Christian rather than heathen.

But when she was four years old, troubles that her mother could not prevent began to gather about her, for her father gave commands that her feet should be bound. That was the one thing which her Christian mother had determined should never be done. Many an hour she now spent turning over in her mind all possible means of evading her husband's will. As far as she could she avoided open conflict on the point, but constantly postponed the operation with one plausible excuse after the other. A year passed in this way, until at last Dock Yee angrily demanded that it be done at once, and set a day for the cruel binding. Joy Come heard the command, and her little face grew white with fear. She shrank from the torture and deformity with all the loathing of her passionate little soul, and when her father had gone she burst into incontrollable sobbing.

"Me no want bind de feet! Oh, me no want!" she cried. Joy Come never spoke Chinese if she could help it.

"I will not bind your feet," said her mother. "I will think what I can do, but I will not bind them."

When the day arrived Dong Ho's plan was made, and she quietly administered to her daughter a Chinese powder which made that damsel immediately ill, and when her father arrived with the bandages and cruel nippers she was unmistakably too sick for any operation, and it was again postponed.

Dong Ho and her daughter now lived in hourly dread; but a week later Dock Yee himself was taken with illness, and thenceforward he thought only of his own condition. A few months later he died, and Dong Ho and her daughter saw him buried with all the ceremony of a heathen funeral.

According to Chinese custom the brother of the deceased man now took possession of his property, and incidentally of his family also. Ship Sing was not a man to be trifled with. He was quite as much of a heathen as his brother had been, and possessed even more will and force of character. He also was determined that Joy Come should be a lady, and that her feet should be formed according to the Chinese fashion. It was with a sinking heart that Dong Ho saw her affairs pass into his hands. True, he allowed her to live alone with Joy Come in their own apartment, but he kept a close watch upon their movements, and she was uncomfortably conscious that he was meditating some plan which boded ill for them.

Dong Ho possessed one relative who was, like herself, a Christian. But he was only a distant cousin, and Ship Sing permitted him no voice in her affairs. This cousin was Lee Young Sing. He was employed in the Custom House, and knew rather more English than most of his countrymen,

which he was very fond of using. He had cut off his queue and wore American clothes. He also followed the American fashion in names, and wrote his own, "Y. S. Lee," placing his surname in the position best understood by his employers. Lee had no sympathy with the heathen customs of his people, and looked with disgust upon foot-binding and the slavery of women. He lived with his mother on one of the side streets of Chinatown, and beautiful Chun Lon lived with them during her father's absence in China.

Young Siug and his family were profoundly attached to Joy Come, and Young Sing might perhaps have owned to something more than a mere friendly interest in the patient Dong Ho had he been quite conscious of it himself. But Chinese social customs forbade him to see much of his cousin, and matters came to a crisis with her unknown to him.

Ship Sing waited for one month after his brother's death, then he walked boldly into Dong Ho's room and said in Chinese :

"What is the reason that you do not follow the China custom and give Joy Come the beautiful feet? You are a bad and stupid woman. Now, I tell you that you must make the little feet in one day. I will come here to-morrow night. If you do not make the little feet to-morrow I will sell you to Jung Kong. I will myself bind her feet and give her to a better woman."

"You will take Joy Come away?" gasped the startled mother.

"Yes, and you shall not see her again."

All night the mother and daughter sought for some way of escape from the impending trouble, but they were apparently helpless, and their tears fell fast. The next day Ship Sing came in again late in the afternoon, and without a word of explanation he dragged Joy Come from her mother's side and carried her by force to a carriage which stood at the door, and drove rapidly away to the station. Here he took the train for Boston. He turned the child over to an elderly Chinese woman whom he called Ah Mo, and told her to bind the child's feet.

Meanwhile the poor mother was frantic with fear and grief. She sent for Young Sing, and when he came she poured out her trouble in pitiful cries and exclamations.

Young Sing quickly investigated, and was told at the company's store that Ship Sing had said he was going to Philadelphia. An hour later Young Sing was on his way to that city. He spent three days there in fruitless search, and returned disappointed and angry to his own home. He visited other cities where distant cousins lived, but there was no trace of the missing child.

In Boston Ah Mo did her best to persuade Joy Come to submit to her uncle's will, but neither tempting jade bracelets nor promised diamond rings could induce her to consent to become a cripple. When Ship Sing grew furious Ah Mo finally refused outright to do the binding herself, for Ah Mo had a secret fear of the American police, and she was dimly aware that they sometimes interfered in family affairs if a child cried too much. So she only shrugged her shoulders at Ship Sing and told him to take Joy Come back to New York.

They arrived in the middle of the night, and the child was sleeping heavily when Ship Sing carried her to his kitchen and laid her down upon the couch. He was disappointed at the outcome of his visit, but his determination was still unshaken, and this the child very well knew.

Morning had not dawned when Joy Come awoke and recognized her surroundings. Without an instant's hesitation she crept down from the couch, slipped back the lock, and went out. Joy Come knew that her mother was powerless to defend her, and she had long meditated a plan to save herself. In Young Sing's house there was a storeroom back of the kitchen. A high and broad shelf ran across a window in this storeroom and reached from wall to wall. A step-ladder stood near, and upon this Joy Come had set her eye. Her plan was to reach this closet, hide on this shelf among the bundles and boxes there, and stay until—until she was sure her feet would not be bound.

Down the street she sped in the gray twilight till she reached Young Sing's house. But the door was locked. She did not want to ring the bell, and could scarcely reach it if she did. But a gate to the rear stood invitingly open, and Joy Come made her way through the covered alley between two abutting walls until she reached the back yard. But here was her real difficulty.

Young Sing lived on the second floor, and Chun Lon's window looked out over the porch roof. How should she reach Chun Lon? Joy Come peered around her in the darkness, and her brave little spirit began to quail. But an expedient did not fail her. A high board fence led directly up to the roof of the porch, and Joy Come knew a

place where she could climb up on this fence. She had been up there many a time and walked across it at the imminent risk of breaking her neck. Fortunately she had on American shoes, and now with many misgivings and muffled exclamations she managed to reach the top of the fence, and moved cautiously toward the porch. It was hard work in that dim twilight, and once a big cat jumped down from a neighboring roof and scared her nearly to death; but with inherent pluck she pushed on. At last she reached the roof, and clambered over to safety with a beating heart.

Ah Lon's¹ window was just even with the top of her head, but it was partly open, and Joy Come called very softly for a time. But Ah Lon was sleeping, as any tired, healthy girl should sleep, and her little friend's soft pleadings did not wake her. Then Joy Come felt along the roof till she found some bits of mud and threw them into the room. But still Ah Lon slept on. Joy Come was almost in tears, and now the morning was beginning to dawn and she feared the neighbors would waken and see her. But just at that moment there began a most terrific caterwauling right on that back fence which she had just left. Ah Lon awoke with a start as Joy Come uttered a little shriek of fear and dismay.

"Who dere? What's matter?"

"It me. Ah Lon, it me. Come takee quick."

Ah Lon flung up the sash in an instant and lifted in the frightened child.

¹ The syllable is used as a diminutive in the Chinese name, and may be placed either before or after the second syllable of the name. Thus Chun Lon is usually called Ah Lon or Lon Ah.

"Joy Come! Where you go? No can find. Young Sing look every day. You mamma cly, cly all time."

"Me go Boston. Jus' come back. Now me hide, hide de big closet up high. No tell Young Sing. No tell Gum Yohe, he mamma."

Ah Lon was aghast at the daring plan, and it took much discussion to pacify her, but Joy Come chuckled with glee at her escape. Just then a broad stream of sunlight burst through the breaking clouds.

"See, de light come. Me go closet quick. Ship Sing no can find," and together the two girls made their way through the kitchen and pushed open the door of the store-room. When half-way up the ladder, Ah Lon went back to her own bed and got a blanket and pillow. These she spread on the shelf on a bundle of old carpets and tucked Joy Come inside. Then she piled the tea boxes along the front of the shelf so as to hide the child from view, and warned by a sound in Gum Yohe's room, she hastily returned to her bed.

When Ship Sing awoke at noon he passed through the kitchen without a glance toward the couch on which he supposed the child was still sleeping. When he reached the street he came face to face with Young Sing, who exclaimed, "Where have you been? Where is Joy Come?"

"She is asleep in my house," replied Ship Sing indifferently.

Young Sing mounted the stairs with a bound. After repeated knockings, Ah Fay, the wife, opened the door, but Joy Come could not be found. Thoroughly angry he again sought his cousin and demanded to know the truth.



DONG HO, JOY COME'S MOTHER.

"I will tell you nothing," replied Ship Sing contemptuously. "Why do you make all this noise? Only because you do not want her to be a lady and have the fine feet. And why do you make all this talk? Do you want to buy her? My price is seven hundred dollars. Will you pay my price?"

"You know that in this 'Melican country nobody buys the girl or the woman. If I buy them I go against the laws of this country. Now I work for this 'Melican government. I will not go against this government."

Ship Sing laughed.

"You have not the good money. I will not give my brother's child to you for nothing."

"I cannot buy her according to this government, and you cannot bind her feet. I will go to the Cruelty Society,¹ and they will take Joy Come away."

Ship Sing's brow grew dark.

"Maybe you have hidden Joy Come," continued Young Sing. "But I will arrest you, and force you to tell where she is," and he went out with angry determination in his face.

Ship Sing was not greatly disturbed by his cousin's threat, for he was too much occupied that day in completing his bargain with Jung Kong to think of it.

And Dong Ho! Oh, the pall of midnight darkness, the thick blackness of the storm-rent midnight was upon her! The agony of suspense was written on every feature. Sharp, stinging pain was in every breath that went and came. Each passing moment was torture to her. Where was Joy Come? Would she ever see her again? Her arms were

¹ Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

aching with their emptiness. Would she ever cradle that little form again? The questions rang in her ears. They seemed written on the air. Every way she turned she saw them. Every sound she heard repeated them.

And then, at dusk, Jung Kong came to take her, and in that culmination of her calamity, consciousness gave way, and she fell to the floor like one dead.

Jung Kong looked at the deathlike face and muttered a curse on his poor bargain. He told the women that gathered round to pick her up, and that he would come the next day and take her away.

Young Sing proceeded to make his threat good, and before night his cousin was served with a summons to produce Joy Come in court on the following day. This order, delivered by a policeman, caused Ship Sing great astonishment, but he finally mounted the tenement house stairs to tell his wife to make Joy Come ready.

Ah Fay looked at him in undisguised amazement.

"When it pleases you to bring Joy Come back again I will make her ready."

"You have let her go," cried the angry husband. "Now therefore send and find her. She is in some one's house. I command you."

Ah Fay sent out her neighbors in all directions, but no stray child with black, laughing, sunlit eyes could be found.

Joy Come heard them calling her, and she cowered down with fear under her blanket, scarcely daring to breathe. The tea boxes and big bundles hid her in their heavy shadows, and no one but faithful Ah Lon knew where she

was hidden. So she tried hard to still her fluttering heart, and to believe that Ship Sing could never, never find her, or put his big, cruel hands on her tender little feet. In the night when every one had gone to bed, and even Young Sing and Gum Yohe with sad and anxious faces had left the kitchen for the night, then Ah Lon crept softly up the ladder.

"Joy Come! Joy Come!" she whispered. "You here? You all lite?" and she gathered the lonely child in her arms.

"Yeh, me all lite. Me no likee dark, dat's all."

"Ship Sing he belly mad. Oh, too muchee mad. He say can find Joy Come he send go China to-morrow. He alle same mad like de big—big—— You stay here, Joy Come. No go down laddee, you all lite. Me bring de rice you can eat. Ship Sing no can find. You stay here." With many comfortings and mutual confidences the two sustained each other till the morning sun warned Ah Lon to depart, and then blessed sleep relieved the little one during the long hours that followed.

With Ship Sing matters were not peaceful. Nobody believed that he had brought Joy Come home again, and many openly advised him to go and get the child, wherever she was. With a pertinacity characteristic of him, he refused to tell where he had been, nor would he give any account of his doings. When Ah Fay had failed to find Joy Come, he had beaten her, and now laid the whole blame of the trouble upon her unfortunate self.

In the courtroom Ship Sing's defense was lame and incoherent, and the judge finally turned to Young Sing and listened patiently as he stated the facts.

"Ship Sing he my cousin. He 'brother' Joy Come's father. Joy Come's father he die. Den Ship Sing no tell anybody, but take Joy Come go some other city. He no tell where go. Bimeby he came back. No got Joy Come. He say got, he no got. Joy Come no came back. He all de time say bind Joy Come's feet. I telling him no can bind de feet dis 'Melican country. He say can bind. He say sure take go bind. Me say Cruelty Society no let he bind de feet. He say he no care Cruelty Society, take go bind all the same. Joy Come my cousin too, all de same my daughter. Me no likee Ship Sing do dat ting my cousin. Me talk much; me no likee. Den Ship Sing take Joy Come go somewheres. Now every man asking him, Where take she go?"

"What have you done with this girl?" asked the judge severely, as he turned to Ship Sing.

"Me no do nothing. Me take go littee visit, dat's all."

"Did you bring her back again?"

"Yeh, me bling back."

"Where is she now?"

"Me no can tell."

"No! No! He no bring back," cried Young Sing. "He wife say no bring back."

The judge turned to the trembling wife.

"Did you see your husband bring back this child?"

"No, me no see; me no can find Joy Come."

"What have you done with that girl?" thundered the judge.

"Me no can tell," was unhappy Ship Sing's blundering reply.

"Lock him up for contempt of court," said the judge. "When he can produce the child, or tell where she is, he may go free."

And Ship Sing was marched away to a cell.

Discussion of the situation was prolonged and elaborate, but no solution was found for it. Nevertheless, Chinatown generally believed that Ship Sing had hidden Joy Come somewhere and had probably already bound her feet, and that it was to save himself from any possible interference by the "Cruelty Society" that he now refused to produce her. They considered the search for her through the neighborhood as a very good bluff, and quite commended his sagacity. That he would eventually extricate himself from his present embarrassing position they did not for a moment doubt, and they smoked their long water pipes in serenity as they awaited the expected *dénouement*.

When Joy Come awoke that afternoon she was thoroughly tired of her prison. The shelf was too near the ceiling for her to stand upright, and she longed to jump and run. She almost pushed one of the tea boxes off the shelf in trying to turn around. She pulled her primer and three marbles out of her pocket and began to play with them, but she was dreadfully lonesome just the same. Then too, she was hungry. Ah Lon could not bring her any breakfast because Gum Yohe would persist in sewing by the kitchen table, and Ah Lon dared not so much as look toward the store-room door. In vain did she suggest that Gum Yohe "Go sew front room," so that she, the industrious Ah Lon, might wash the floor. Gum Yohe said it did not need washing that day. Ah Lon talked about Joy

Come and expressed great curiosity as to the result of the morning's inquiry in the court-room. She even grew so anxious that she begged Gum Yohe to go to the neighbors, down by Ah Fay's house, to ask if they had heard what was done, for Young Sing had not yet returned home. But Gum Yohe did not feel like visiting her neighbors, and failed to fall into the trap. It was full four o'clock and Ah Lon was almost in despair because the cravings of a certain little stomach troubled her conscience greatly. At last Gum Yohe settled the question herself by going into her own room to cry, and then Ah Lon softly mounted the ladder and carried up the steaming breakfast. Joy Come was in tears, very big, hot tears, but they all disappeared when she saw Ah Lon and what she had for her to eat.

It was near midnight when Young Sing at last came home and rehearsed the events of the day. Gum Yohe listened in silence, but there was still no answer to the question absorbing the mind of each, and which was also exasperating a certain lonely Chinaman in a cell over in the city prison, namely: "Where is Joy Come?"

Now Ah Lon had left the store-room door open "just one littee crack" so that a tiny ray of light from the kitchen should fall against that upper shelf. It was a great comfort to Joy Come. Nevertheless, in utter wretchedness of spirit, she had crawled over to the edge of the shelf and cried herself to sleep.

Young Sing and his mother sat by the fire, silent and dejected. All at once a sigh reached them. Both started up.

"What's matter?" said Young Sing, going toward Ah Lon's bedroom.



YOUNG SING'S MOTHER.

But Ah Lon was sound asleep and certainly was not crying.

He looked disturbed, but sat down again by the fire, when once more came that soft, sad sigh, more unmistakably than before.

"Who dat?" cried Young Sing, and threw open the store-room door. As the light streamed in it fell upon a long red tassel dangling from a tiny black queue over the edge of a high shelf. With a bound Young Sing had mounted the ladder, and in another instant a diminutive Chinese maiden was half lifted, half dragged from out the tumbling tea boxes and old clothes.

"Ah Come! Ah Come!" cried Gum Yohe. And then Joy Come awoke and wound her two arms around the neck of her friend in such an ecstasy of joy that she sobbed.

"Ah Come! Who put you dere?"

"Nobody put. Me put. Me flaid Ship Sing."

"You take go dere yourself?"

"Yeh. Only Ah Lon. Me no let Ah Lon tell."

In astonishment Young Sing and his mother discussed the strange turn of affairs, while Joy Come, eager and happy once more, sat in his lap. Her two big eyes shone with their old, soft laughter, and her lips and dimpled cheeks invited kisses by the score.

"What I do now? Joy Come hide; no can put Ship Sing in prison."

The more he looked at it the more embarrassing was his position.

"Ship Sing velly bad man. He say he take my mamma go sell Jung Kong."

Young Sing sprang from his chair.

"Jung Kong one too muchee bad man. He gamble. He kill de man. He velly bad Highbinder. He buy de woman all de time. Sell every day. He no can buy Dong Ho. I no let."

"Yeh, he buy. Me no want my mamma go Jung Kong."
But Young Sing was already out of the house.

Dong Ho sat in her rocking-chair with wide, hollow eyes, and it seemed as if all sense had left her. She had neither eaten nor slept for days.

"Dong Ho, Dong Ho, no cly. Jung Kong no can buy. Me no let. Me take go my house."

But the wretched woman looked at him without speaking, and he almost wept himself as he gazed at that image of stonelike despair. At last she raised her arms and cried out with all her pent-up agony in her shrill voice :

"Joy Come! Joy Come! Where?"

Young Sing caught hold of her.

"Joy Come my house. She hide. Me take go see."

He almost carried her through the deserted street and up the stairs to the kitchen door, and then she saw the child. She sprang forward on her bound feet, and they laid the little one against her heart.

An hour later Young Sing spoke quite slowly and solemnly to his cousin : "Dong Ho, you know dis 'Melican countly velly diffent old China countly. Dis 'Melican countly no buy woman, no buy de girl. De woman all same free like de man. When will marry no can buy. Must make de love, all de good heart for de woman.

Woman allee same make de good heart for de man. If not make de good heart no can marry. Now you got de too muchee trouble, all de time since baby too muchee trouble for you. You velly good Clistian; no wors'ip de idol. Dock Yu lick allee time, you no wors'ip. You teach Joy Come love de Jesus-God. You allee time one velly good woman. Now Ship Sing take go sell Jung Kong. No can sell dis 'Melican countly. You no go Jung Kong. Me likee you velly much. Me got de good heart for you. Me asking you come my wife allee same like de good 'Melican girl. Me no lickee. Me no sell. No sell Joy Come. Me no let trouble come for you any more. You likee come b'long me?"

Dong Ho listened with ever-growing amazement, and a faint flush crept over her pale cheek as he waited for his answer.

"Me likee," and her eyes fell under his kindly glance.

Young Sing brought a magistrate to the house before most people had eaten their breakfasts, and in the sight of all the neighbors who cared to see, he married Dong Ho, and Joy Come and Ah Lon stood beside them almost as happy as themselves.

Ship Sing was set at liberty, but an angrier man did not walk in Chinatown that day. Nevertheless his night in prison had been a salutary lesson, and he did his cousin no harm, aside from making innumerable threats and swearing lifelong enmity.

Dong Ho's feet were unbound under the care of a skillful physician, and in time she learned to walk quite well. But better than all, her husband's love taught her to smile, and

now I know no sweeter face in all the colony than hers. It is the perfect peace, that incomparable shining that comes after the storm which laid all things low. Blessed Dong Ho!

And Joy Come? She has returned to the kindergarten, and her gentle laughter and witching eyes are the delight of her friends and teachers. She is "Joy Come" to us all, the very embodiment of mirth and overflowing happiness, a bit of heaven's gladness let down into our careworn lives.



JOY COME'S FRIEND.

JOY COME.

IV

THE WEDDING BELLS THAT RANG
FOR AH LON

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THE WEDDING BELLS THAT RANG FOR AH LON

AH LON'S father remained in China longer than he expected, so that Ah Lon was fully eighteen before he returned. She was the most beautiful girl in Chinatown, with a creamy complexion and long lashes falling over her rounded cheeks and veiling her shining, black eyes. Her black hair was always smoothly combed back from her forehead, from which the maiden hair had never been plucked in token of marriage, and was coiled in the smoothest of graceful coils in the back of her neck.

Ah Lon was not only beautiful, she was good—so good that her name throughout Chinatown was nothing less than “Ah Lon, the chaste flower of virtue.” Now the name Chow Lon means “a fragrant tuberose of autumn,” and Ah Lon is its dainty diminutive. All agreed that her name fitted her perfectly, and great was the speculation in Chinatown as to who should have the “beautiful autumn flower.” Even before Lee Mon Gwi, Ah Lon's father, had returned to China, two thousand dollars dowry had been offered for her, but that sagacious man had declined it, saying that his daughter was not to be married until he returned.

In the meantime Ah Lon was like a daughter to Young Sing and his wife Dong Ho. Joy Come, Young Sing's step-

daughter, was nothing less than a little sister to Ah Lon, and the two were never long apart, save when Joy Come had to go to the kindergarten.

Ah Lon was born in New York, but she had never been out of Chinatown, save once when she was five years old and was sick, when her father had taken her to Coney Island. But of that startling day she retained now only faint memories. Of the wide world beyond the little house in which she lived, Ah Lon knew nothing. Its great enterprises, its learning, and above all, its marvelous social customs, were all unknown to her.

Now you know that in the good old China way husbands and wives never go together before they are married. The fathers choose a husband from the men who can pay the most money or offer the best position to his daughter, and the girl who is to be married never presumes to express any preference in the matter. Indeed, she could not have a preference if she should, for all suitors are alike unknown to her, since her male acquaintance is limited to her immediate relatives only. Chinese people of proper breeding never deign to express affection for each other in the presence of any one, not even of their children. But when Dong Ho married Young Sing she had not been in his house a week before he actually kissed her in the sight of the whole family, just as any happy American bridegroom would do, and Ah Lon was so dreadfully scandalized that she could not look him in the face for a week.'

Nevertheless, the genuine affection between Young Sing and Dong Ho, and its gentle expression, began at last to tell upon even Ah Lon, the personification of maidenly mod-

esty, and eventually some centuries-old inherited prejudices began to give way. Joy Come undoubtedly had something to do with it also, for that fascinating little damsel could wring love from the iciest heart. It is said that the wooden man in front of the cigar store smiled at Joy Come on two occasions, and plenty of witnesses saw it, but I give it only on their evidence. Certainly, tender Ah Lon could not withstand her.

But what in the long run really broke Ah Lon's Chinese propriety all to bits was that untrammelled, nature-free courtship of Esther Isaacsen's, which she blushinglly witnessed across the back fence.

Esther and her lover were Hebrews, and lived on a street only partly occupied by Chinese. Here the elder Isaacsen had built a big flat with stores underneath. He occupied the biggest apartment himself, and certainly lived in downtown splendor. There was Brussels carpet on the floors, and there were lace curtains at the windows, and a piano stood in the parlor.

Abraham Cohn, the prospective son-in-law, was studying law, and Esther and he were to be married as soon as he graduated, which was to be that June. In the meantime, when school hours were over, Esther and Abraham retired to the fire-escape, under a bower of ivy and roses, to enjoy the late afternoon hours—and each other.

Now this fire-escape was immediately opposite Ah Lon's window in the rear of Young Sing's house, and that maiden of exquisite propriety saw them. At first she was so astonished and ashamed that no expression could be found for her shocked feelings. She was obliged to close the blinds

tightly to shut out the awful scene. But in the course of time she recovered somewhat, and the slats were finally opened nearly an inch.

Now Esther and Abraham were very fond of each other, and there were no inherited ideas of a terrible propriety to hinder them. So Esther's head was on Abraham's shoulder, and Abraham's arm was around Esther's waist whenever those individuals wished them so to be, and when Ah Lon began at length to steal curious glances out at this pair, a queer feeling of regret came over her own young heart; for ah, the pattern in hearts is alike all the world over. When Esther, in womanly witchery, turned away from Abraham, Ah Lon sighed, and when Abraham, with the tenderest persuasions, turned her back again, Ah Lon smiled with sympathy. As the weeks flew by and June was nearing, Ah Lon never thought of closing the blind. With graceful arms upstretched above her face, she waited breathless, until the unconscious young lovers should appear.

Just above the Isaacsen flat, Moy Yen Suey had his office. Yen Suey came to America at the age of fifteen, and had immediately begun to imbibe Western ideas and customs with perhaps more zest than discretion. He admired everything pertaining to his adopted country with an admiration so profound as to be almost pathetic. He put on American dress, and did his best to master the English tongue, but the latter task was manifestly too much for him. Yet he was very proud of his English, such as it was, and rarely ever spoke anything else, until his countrymen accused him of being a traitor to his own country and forgetting its language.

Yen Suey early went into the business of importing Chinese ginger and sundry confections, and in eight years he had made ten thousand dollars. Then, when these peculiar dainties began to pall upon the American taste, he discreetly sold out, and retired to live in comfort upon his modest fortune. Nevertheless he carried on, or pretended to do so, a small real estate business, and occasionally acted for his countrymen as a go-between in the arrangement of sales or rentals. He had fitted up his "office," which was also his home, in a style half-American, half-Oriental, and here he spent untroubled days poring over Chinese classics, and also trying to comprehend the rudiments of English literature.

Now Yen Suey did not see Esther Isaacsen and her lover, for the very good reason that the fire-escape was directly beneath him, but he did see, with much astonishment, across the courtyard in the back of Young Sing's house, Ah Lon's little figure at the window over the porch. From her round, soft arms the wide sleeves of her Chinese jacket had fallen back, and her lustrous, black eyes looked out with a mute, wondering gaze at some object just beneath him. He saw her red lips part, as the soft sighs escaped them because of the blissful things that happened outside her—the China girl's—range. And as she gazed, motionless and absorbed, Cupid, mischievous, roving, unprincipled Cupid, then and there emptied his whole quiverful of arrows into Yen Suey's heart.

For three weeks he scarcely ate or slept. Business was forgotten. The Chinese classics no longer existed, at least so far as he was concerned. Day by day he watched for the

little figure at the casement, for the wondering, lustrous eyes that never for an instant were raised to his. He could see her gentle breast heave, and the pathetic gestures of those exquisite arms went to his heart.

At last he could bear it no longer. Dressing himself with great precision he went to Young Sing's house, and there engaged that individual in an animated conversation.

"She fader Lee Mon Gwi," explained Young Sing. "He talkee sellee Ah Lon too muchee big money. He talkee twenty-tlee hund'ed dolla."

"Dat allee same old kind China style," said Yen Suey in disgust. "Melican man no buy de girl. Me likee Melican style more better. De girl no allee same like de big horse or de cow."

"Dat all lite. Me no likee China style. But Mon Gwi no likee dis Melican style. He no Clistian, he only de headen man."

"You talk Mon Gwi me give de good jacket, give de too muchee good bracelets an' de rings. Me every time buy de diamond. Get mallied all de same Melican style."

"Mon Gwi no do dat. Hop Ho tell he give two t'ousan' dolla long time ago. Mon Gwi no takee."

Yen Suey began negotiations with Mon Gwi, but that individual demanded a purchase price of enormous proportions, with no discounts for American sentiment's sake. Yen Suey prepared an elaborate address to his hoped-for father-in-law, setting forth the value of the "white flower" as beyond compute, and lauding the Western liberty in such matters. But Mon Gwi was not only obdurate, but his heart was of the hardness of the nether millstone in

this matter. Moreover, upon the strength of Yen Suey's eulogy of the maid, he advanced her price several hundreds more.

It was not the question of money with Yen Suey. He was willing to give his whole fortune for her, but he had most devoutly espoused new-world ideas, and to go back from them was unthinkable to him. The more he pondered it the more baneful the proposition became, and as he again looked across at her delicate face and its tender expression, he decided that it was not possible, not at all possible to do her an indignity so awful. Then he wrote a sonnet in the most classic of classic Chinese and sent it around by the hand of Joy Come :

O flower,
O chaste flower of the glowing autumn,
O most beauteous blossom of the lily field
I sing,
I sing to thee,
Bend thy face to me,
Let the fragrance of thy delicious breath
Flow into my waiting nostrils,
Refresh this unworthy one with thy love.

Ah Lon read the epistle while Joy Come pointed to its writer anxiously viewing them from above the fire-escape. She was stupefied at first, but when she at last grasped its meaning, she looked up at the tall man in speechless amazement, and then with crimson cheeks and a startled cry she broke from the window and hid her face in the pillows of her bed.

"What's matter? You no likee, Ah Lon?" questioned Joy Come anxiously.

Ah Lon could not reply, nor lift her face, but she crumpled the sonnet up tightly in her hand and hid it deep in her jacket pocket.

Yen Suey watched in vain for his lady-love at the window the next day, but the shutters were tightly closed. Nevertheless, Ah Lon was behind them, and was stealing sundry glances at him all through the day. She saw a man of pleasant and somewhat high-bred face, and in spite of her prejudices, she liked the kindly look of his eyes. He was much like Young Sing, her cousin, the only Chinaman she had ever known who loved his wife. Strange fancies flitted through her mind, and some queer castles began building in the air between her and the tall man watching her closed shutters so patiently. But if love was beginning to live in her heart, she gave no sign, and her shutters did not open again for many a day.

In due time Young Sing informed her of Yen Suey's negotiations, but told her also of the seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Her father had—well, he had the Chinese determination, and that leaves nothing more to be said. Yen Suey was also Chinese, and his will was equally of that nationality, and the conjunction reminded one of nothing so much as the famous problem, "If an irresistible force meets an immovable body, what then?"

Negotiations continued for the hand of Ah Lon. Other suitors, less sensitive upon the question of barter, discussed various prices. Yen Suey also continued his efforts. He employed different go-betweens, and prepared eloquent harangues in the hope of moving the fatherly heart, but Lee Mon Gwi listened to nothing save the talk in four fig-



ALL LON.

ures on the left side of the decimal point. In the course of time a suitor was chosen and Mon Gwi sent word to his daughter that she was to be married one month from date. He did not condescend to tell her the name of her future bridegroom, but Ah Lon knew it was not Yen Suey. Her betrothed lover, who had never seen her, by the way, sent her presents of bracelets and jade jewelry of many kinds, but Ah Lon tossed them into a drawer without so much as looking at them.

That very hour Ah Lon went to the window and flung the blinds open, and when Yen Suey came and gazed down upon her, she summoned all the latent courage of the Chinawoman's heart, and looked straight up into his face. Then Yen Suey knew he was accepted, and was in a transport of delight forthwith.

But how to obtain her was not yet clear. His last embassy to the father was even refused admission, and he was compelled to admit defeat in that quarter.

As for Ah Lon, she had entire faith in the man who loved her, and was not troubled. He would surely obtain her in some way.

Meanwhile Esther Isaacsen was preparing a wonderful white dress across the way, and Ah Lon strained her eyes and even leaned out of her window trying to make out its details.

Young Sing had told her that Yen Suey wished to marry her according to the American style, and Ah Lon supposed that he meant her to wear the American clothes also, and her curiosity grew apace. She felt that it was absolutely necessary that she know the details of the American wed-

ding ceremony and the intricacies of the American woman's wedding gown.

But who was there to tell her all these wonderful things? She thought about it for several days, and at last a plan evolved itself from her much thinking.

"Joy Come," she whispered, when that damsel came in from the kindergarten, "you go ask when the Jew girl get mallied. Me want know. You no tell Chinaman. Just go ask."

Joy Come demurely betook herself to the front of the Jew girl's store. She had not loitered there many minutes when the children told her that the wedding was to be two days hence, in the afternoon, and there were to be lots of carriages, and, oh, such candy and cake and festivities as had never before been thought of.

Joy Come sped back as fast as her nimble feet could carry her and poured it all into Ah Lon's waiting ears.

"Now go tell Ilish Mary to come dis house. Me want see her quick."

Soon the old Irish woman toiled slowly up the stairs and sat down, while Ah Lon unfolded her plan.

"Me want go see Jew girl get mallied all same Melican style. Me want Melican dress, an' de hat an' de slive an' de glove. Me want Melican dress for Joy Come too. Then we want one carriage; no come house, come down stleet; den you take Joy Come an' take me an' go carriage see Jew girl mallied all same Melican style."

Ah Lon pulled out two shining gold pieces of twenty dollars each, her present on her last New Years, and gave one piece to the Irish woman.

Two days later, while the sun was shining brightly on a warm June afternoon, Yen Suey saw a strange sight through Ah Lon's open window. There was a slender, girlish figure in a dainty white dress and an old Irish woman fastening white ribbons in her shining braids of black hair. A small child, likewise robed in white, was dancing around the girl with half-suppressed glee, when she was not peering through the keyhole to guard against possible discovery. Yen Suey gazed in astonishment as he slowly recognized Ah Lon, and then he saw her put on a white hat and lastly the Irish woman suddenly covered her with a black cloak. and then all disappeared toward the doorway.

Yen Suey's heart was in his mouth. Where was his Ah Lon, his beautiful autumn flower, going? For a moment his pulses stood still. Then he seized his hat and plunged down the stairs, four at a time. He had just reached a side street when he saw two black-robed figures and a white-gowned child get into a coach and roll away. It was but the work of a moment to call another cab and charge after them.

Now this was the day when Mr. Many-millions' daughter was to be married to the fifth son of Duke Something, and all the city was talking of it. A great church had been decorated and music and entertainment were engaged at lavish expense.

When, therefore, Irish Mary told the driver to take them to the wedding, there was but one wedding in all the city present to the simple cabman's mind, and thither he drove with all state and ceremony.

Crowds blocked the street around the doorway of the

church and carriage after carriage drove up to the covered archway. When it came time for Ah Lon's carriage to move up she almost fainted at the sight of the people, but Irish Mary pulled her out and before she knew it she and Joy Come were ushered into a side aisle and crushed into a seat, while just behind them, only a dozen feet away, a panting Chinaman was gazing at them over a walnut railing.

Then the music began and Ah Lon's heart seemed to beat in unison with its joyful movement. She was still afraid, oh, dreadfully afraid. She thought she would suffocate, but no one paid any attention to her, and at last she breathed more easily.

Then the march began, and soon to the sonorous music the wedding procession entered. There were children and bridesmaids, and lastly the bride in shimmering white garments with a veil of cloudlike lace falling down from her proudly poised head.

And then Ah Lon listened as the venerable bishop came forward and pronounced slowly and solemnly the wonderful words that united the man and the woman, and a sudden awe fell upon her, and marriage took on a new and holy meaning to her young mind.

And then there was the ring, but she did not quite understand that, and suddenly there was a burst of jubilant music until the great church seemed to tremble with harmony succeeding harmony, as the man and the woman marched slowly down the aisle again.

And Ah Lon saw the bride's face and it looked very happy and bright, as if a whole vista of joyful years

stretched out before her and the Chinese girl thought it must be a very happy thing to be married in the American style, for no China woman looked like that—only Dong Ho, who smiled for the first time in her life when she was married to Young Sing.

And while Ah Lon still gazed the bride disappeared, and the great chimes in the steeple were sending out peals of loveliest music on the warm air, as the people slowly left the church.

Yen Suey had noted all these things with eager interest, but his mind was also busy with another thought—a great thought, and one upon which he was sternly determined to act.

As the crowd thinned a little he went forward and bowed low before the woman of his choice. Ah Lon looked at him with great surprise.

“My beautiful flower,” he said in their native tongue, “my heart desires you for its companion. I ask if you will mally me now?”

Ah Lon could hardly speak. Her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, but at last she uttered the single word :

“Yes.”

With mingled pride and dignity Yen Suey strode up the aisle and straight into the bishop’s presence.

“I asking you, kind sir, you do me so much good favor to mally me this Melican style. My one China girl come too.”

“You want to be married?” asked the bishop, in surprise. “And married in the American style? Are you a Christian?”

"Yes. Me been Christian long time ago. Me want get mallied all same Melican man. Me love my one China girl velly much. Me no buy—me mally allee same flee (free) woman. You take come see?"

Yen Suey led the way to the back of the church, and in another moment Ah Lon found her hand in the bishop's, and his keen, but kindly eyes, were looking down into her face.

"How old is she?"

"She eighteen this time last month. She velly good girl."

"Does her father give his consent to her marriage with you?"

Yen Suey's brow grew dark.

"Her fader allee time talkee go sell—pay money. Me say no pay money. Me no like buy like de horse or de cow. Me will feel de good heart, take de good care, no buy like de pig."

"Yes; yes," said the bishop thoughtfully.

The assistants gathered around and the organist and sexton listened with smiling sympathy.

"And you want to be married now?"

"Yes. We want mally velly much just now. You can mally now?"

"Yes, I suppose I can, if there are no impediments," and after some moments' talk the bishop turned back to the chancel.

The organist returned to his instrument, and a more joyous wedding march he never played. The sexton beckoned Irish Mary aside and put in her hand a big bunch of snowy

flowers which he mulcted from the decorations, and Joy Come, dignified and serene, walked majestically before the bride upon the broad aisle between the satin ribbons and great bunches of palms and orange trees.

Again the bishop came down to the steps and again fell those solemn and holy words, spoken slowly while each syllable fell in power upon their hushed hearts, and then—Yen Suey and Ah Lon were one.

The chimes had ceased to ring for the first bride, but they suddenly rang out again, for the bell-ringer had climbed up again to the belfry and never played more heartily, and to their happy pealing Ah Lon and her joyful bridegroom drove away toward Chinatown.

But oh, great was the consternation there, and awful were the anathemas heaped upon the heads of those devoted lovers. Lee Mon Gwi narrowly escaped apoplexy, but a few days later, Yen Suey, out of gratitude to Providence and the real generosity of his heart, made a present to his father-in-law of a house worth five thousand dollars, and that individual's wrath was notably appeased.

Meanwhile Yen Suey hired a flat right next door to the Isaacsens', and furnished it with almost regal splendor—for Chinatown—and took his beautiful bride to her new home the very day that Esther and Abraham came back from their wedding trip.

And so Ah Lon's marriage to Yen Suey was a happy one, after all.

V

“WHO CLY?”

“WHO CLY?”

A CROWD of excited women gathered on the landing of the stairs at the top floor, and peered out of the tene-ment window into the semi-darkness of the courtyard.

“Who cly?” they asked one another in fear.

“Nobody cly dis house.”

“Somebody cly. Everybody hear jus’ as plain.”

“Yeh. Everybody hear. Awful big loud.”

Again that piercing shriek rang on the air, and the women started and clutched at each other with blanched faces.

“Who cly? Who cly dere?” shouted through the window out into the night. But there was no answer.

“You tink Melican gal cly like dat?”

“May be ’Talian gal. One bad ’Talian man kill de lady las’ week.”

“May be some too muchee bad Ilish man get dlunk, lick he wife.”

“Me nevva hear Ilish lady cly like dat.”

Again that fearful shriek rang out, more piercing than before, but at its height it ceased to be heard as if some one had stifled it.

“That no Ilish woman. That little gal cly,” cried Som Ni. Ah Mo stood next the window listening intently.

“Me believe dat Jung Kong housie,” she said. “Yeh, sure, dat come Jung Kong housie—top side, up by de roof.”

"Oh, dat Jung Kong!" cried the women.

"Me wish somebody kill dat Jung Kong," said Som Ni fiercely.

"Why no high-binder cut he throat?" asked Chow Gwi.

"He de debbil bad man," said Luk Som.

"Jung Kong too muchee bad man. Dead man no want him go die, no want him down dead man housie," said Ah Po, with biting sarcasm.

"Who Jung Kong get now?" asked Som Ni. "He been back China again?"

"No; just come las' week San Flancisco."

"Who he get San Flancisco?"

"No can tell. He get any wife or girl he can get. He de worse bad man dis Melican countly."

But though the women listened for half an hour the cries were not heard again that night, and they at last dispersed with the mystery still unsolved.

Ah Fah, the little flower, was the idol of her mother's heart. They lived in far San Francisco, and all went well with them till Ah Fah's father, Loo Gen, fell to gambling. Everybody said it was Gong Gue's fault, for he enticed Loo Gen, and took all his winnings. Then when Loo Gen, in a fit of desperation, killed himself, Gong Gue seized Loc Gen's wife and child in payment of the balance of his gambling debts. This was a cruel thing for poor Lin Ah, for one day Gong Gue came and carried off Ah Fah, the little flower, and left Lin Ah with aching arms, wondering who had bought her baby, and who would be kind to her, now that she was only a helpless slave-girl.

But the customs of the China people are remorseless, and justice, mother rights, and breaking hearts are no plea against them. So poor Lin Ah beat her poor breast and sighed, and sobbed hard, tearless sobs day by day, but no one brought back her baby nor told her where she had gone.

Then a purchaser was found for Lin Ah herself. He came to see her one day, and Lin Ah perceived a kindly man with a gentle and persuasive voice. But she did not understand his Chinese.

"Me Hakka woman," she said. "Me no savee."

"You Hakka woman?" he asked in surprise. "Me come Canton. Me talkee English littee bit too. Me talkee English to you."

"Gong Gue telling me your hussaban' die. He telling me you Clistian woman. Me likee you Clistian. Me long time wantee get mallied. Me no wantee headen wife. Me wantee Clistian wife. Me make de Di Ni, de Number One wife. Me always make you de Di Ni. Me no want mally number two, nevva mally too muchee wife. Me no like old China style, mally too muchee wife. Me likee you. You likee come mally me?"

"You make de Di Ni sure?" asked Lin Ah, in much anxiety. "Me likee be good woman. Me no likee be de bad lady."

"Yeh. Me sure makee de number one. Me Clistian man."

"All lite. Me likee you velly much. Me makee velly good wife for you, you makee de Di Ni. Me all time velly good, do evvyting you likee."

That hour the price was paid and Chu Jet took his bride to the missionary's house and was married with all due solemnity. A few days later they started for a far-away eastern city, where Chu Jet owned several laundries and a small tea business. Lin Ah was more than pleased with her new husband. She soon grew to love him passionately, but still her heart hungered for her child. As the days dragged by the craving would not be satisfied. She tried to busy herself with the cares of her new home, but time hung heavily on her hands. Then she took in Chinese jackets to make, that she might forget that awful loneliness, and the ceaseless aching of the mother-heart. But Chu Jet forbade the sewing, for her face was growing thin and wan and her eyes glittered with unnatural light. He told her to get an American dress and go outdoors. The sunshine would make her well. So she put on a skirt and short jacket over her Chinese blouse and went to visit her neighbors.

Dong Ho's baby, with eyes as bright as sweet Joy Come's, comforted her a little,—at least for the moment,—but soon she would put the boy down and with a restless step and wistful, saddening eyes, she hurried on again. She seemed to know every Chinese family in the colony, and wandered from one to the other in aimless, but ceaseless, quest. Yet there were some houses on the street which she shunned as if pestilence dwelt there. The Chinese began to gossip about her, but something in those weary, searching eyes stilled the scandal on their tongues and they only said, "She is mad."

Chu Jet was almost as unhappy as his wife. His love for

her was complete, but all the kindness and care he gave her could not undo the work of that awful separation from her child. She was clearly going mad. She was not violent. She seemed to grow more gentle every day. She never complained. But she was never still, and the heavy sighs came unconsciously from her lips as she roamed from room to room and from house to house.

“Who cly? Who cly again?”

The women rushed to the balcony. There was again the piercing shriek, and then a long, sad wavering cry that floated out over the housetops as if some one were in mortal and incurable anguish.

“Who cly Jung Kong’s housie?”

“Somebody go tell policeman. Somebody takee him come see.”

But no one dared to do it. Such interference in their neighbor’s business was unpardonable in the Chinese mind and would have brought speedy punishment from the unfortunate offender’s husband. So they listened and shuddered and cried a little in sympathy as the sad wailing continued. And continue it did till far into the night.

The next day they talked about it in whispers, and wondered what tragedy was enacting in the forbidding house of the unspeakable slave-trader. That night they burned incense before their doors and said many prayers to ward off bad luck and evil spirits.

Some one also told Young Sing that cries were heard at night from Jung Kong’s house, and that evil-hating man denounced his countryman at the station-house that day

and told the officers at the desk that they ought to raid Jung Kong's place without further delay. But the detectives complained lamely of lack of evidence and shrugged their shoulders. Before night, however, Jung Kong was compelled to pay one hundred dollars as extra protection money, and to keep certain windows and doors fastened more securely than ever. But his precautions did not extend to the attic, else might not this story have been written.

At the foot of the attic stairs was a narrow room under the roof. There was a broken bed by an unwashed window, and heaps of refuse in every corner. On the bed lay a child with a deathlike face. Her black, unbraided hair strung in disheveled strands across the foul pillow. Her hands were waxen and damp and pitifully small. Her eyes wandered to and fro like one in delirium, and clammy sweat stood upon her cold brow. Her thin legs stretched over the edge of the bed and each ended in a bundle of foul-smelling, blood-soaked rags.

A wail, long, piercing, anguished, fell from the ghastly lips and rent the night air, blanching the faces of the startled women in the tenements. Again and again it fell and they gathered to listen in shivering groups on the staircase.

In the dim light of the attic, as the night sped on, the unseeing eyes rolled grewsomely in their staring sockets; the threadlike fingers clutched impotently at the empty air. The uncanny hair moved snakelike on the filthy pillow. The rag-clothed stumps were still, while red blood dropped in a pool from each and hardened on the floor.

But one had heard that cry and knew it, Lin Ah. Upon her roof, wandering ceaselessly to still the aching of that riven heart, she heard the shriek and agonizing moan, and the tone was like the sound of her own soul's voice.

"Ah Fah! Ah Fah!" she cried. "Ah Fah!"

Over the roof she clambered, and sprang from edge to edge.

"Ah Fah! Ah Fah!"

Did no one hear her? Did no one come to stay her feet in the darkness, or guide over the perilous roofs?

"Ah Fah! Ah Fah! Ah Fah!"

On cornice abutment, from stone to stone, across deep shafts, on jutting edge she leaped and ran and followed that rending cry.

"Ah Fah! Ah Fah!" she called, and leaped a wall and fell upon a rotting roof, while below the wail welled up again and told her her child was near. At the attic stairs the latch was open, and down into the dim light of the hallway she sped, nor knew aught till she stood before the deathlike face and unseeing eyes. With a great cry she clasped the unconscious burden to her heart.

Up the broken stairs she flew, and out across the roof, while below her was confusion and hoarse shouts, and the noise of pursuing men.

What held her feet in the darkness? Who kept her in the perils of that night, and saved her where others dared not tread?

On and on she went, not knowing whither, while they waited in the streets for her, and gnashed their teeth with rage.

But the All-seeing One took note ; his eye guided ; the steps of angels were round about her. On a strange roof she paused ; a door opened to her hand and she went down, down, and friends grasped her in their hands. Young Sing's arms held her and her burden, and Dong Ho's face was beside her.

"Di Ni ! Di Ni ! What for this ?"

"Me baby ! Gong Gne take her go sell. Oh, help ! Come take me go he no can find. He killee me ; he take go sell again. Oh, help !"

A noise of confusion was heard in the street.

"Come dis way. We take go policeman. He help sure ! Come."

Through the alley he led her into a side street, but the crowd was there gazing at the roofs, and he fell back into the shadow. Chu Jet passed them with the excitement of fear in his face. Young Sing noiselessly drew him aside, and in one look he comprehended it all.

"Me get police," he whispered, and hurried away. The moments seemed years before he came back with officers and they took their way to the station house.

Instantly the crowd saw them and dashed down the street. Two men struggled fiercely to reach the fleeing woman, and blows were rained right and left.

Struggling, swaying, fighting, breathless, the mass surged up to the door, and into the bright light officers led a woman bearing an unconscious child with bleeding feet.

"Me baby ! Me baby !" she cried. "Gong Gue take go sell. He break de feet. He killee. See !" She held up the bleeding stumps.



LIN AH.

"Who did that?" called out the captain.

"Dat man, Gong Gue," and she pointed to her pursuer.

"He name Jung Kong. You call Gong Gue?" asked a Chinaman.

"San Flancisco call Gong Gue, no Jung Kong. He sellee me, dis man be me hussaban'. He take me baby go sell. Now he break de feet. See, me baby allee same die."

"Did you bind that child's feet?" questioned the captain angrily.

"She my gal," answered Jung Kong, too angry to realize the evidence he was giving against himself. "She no b'long dat China-woman. B'long me. She only make give back, dat's all."

"Lock that man up," said the captain, pointing to Jung Kong, "and call an ambulance for the child."

In the hospital Lin Ah waited without the door. Would God, the God of love whom she worshiped, spare the life of the child whom he had given back to her as by a miracle?

Chu Jet and Young Sing were praying silently while she paced ceaselessly before the door.

Inside the surgeons were working.

"Look at that?" one said. "They've torn off every nail. Look at those toes! There's not a whole bone in them. Great God! Can such men be human?"

Moment by moment the time dragged on, and every one seemed an age. At last the door opened, and on a white cot a little figure lay peacefully, her dark hair brushed back from her forehead, her tiny hands resting quietly on her breast.

"She will live," said the surgeon, "and I think we can save her feet. We can tell better in a day or two. She must be kept very quiet now, but you can come and see her again to-morrow."

That night Di Ni lay down upon her bed in peace, and the wild light had gone from her eyes.

For many days she sat beside the little bed in the hospital and watched the color creep slowly back into the childish cheeks, and the little hands begin to grow soft and plump again. And when the winter had passed and the warm spring came, one day—one blessed, blessed day—they led the child out through the hospital doors and took her to Chinatown, to the happiest of happy homes.

But Jung K'ong went to the penitentiary, and he will be an old man when he comes out.

VI

AH FAY

AH FAY

FAY was only a laundry boy. He had been something far better, ah, yes. He had, for one whole year, worked as janitor in the mission in Chinatown. He was pretty small to be a janitor, for he was only twelve years old, but he could sweep, and clean windows, and scrub halls, and keep books and furniture in order as well as anybody.

But his great joy was his Sunday usefulness. On that day, that high feast day in his youthful imagination, he was the great factotum of the place. Without him it seemed as if the mission could not have existed, certainly things would not have run so smoothly as they did had he not been there. For it was Fay who stood at the door and gravely shook hands with every one that came in, and who ushered all to their particular places. It was Fay who had an especial eye for strangers and reserved the best seats for them; who hung their hats on the most conspicuous hooks; who found the hymns for them, and pointed out the end at which to begin.

Moreover, he lighted the gas at exactly the right time. He put up the violinist's stand at just the proper angle to catch the best light. He always had everything in its place, and nothing was missing that should be there.

Certainly he was a model for sextons and janitors the world over, and perhaps for some classes of ushers besides.

But he not only attended to the mechanical part of his duties well, but he was the best exponent of the mission's work that any visitor ever saw. He could tell more about the work in five minutes than most of the missionaries could in a day, and besides, he was in himself a living and ocular demonstration of that mission's accomplishment, for Fay was a convert from heathenism, of whom any church or institution might have been proud.

But Ah Fay did not come to this state of perfection without difficulty. Indeed, no! It was difficult from the earliest beginning. At the outset, when the missionaries offered him the position of janitor, his uncles objected. Now Fay was only a little Chinese waif whose father was dead, and whose mother did not count in the reckoning of the Chinese mind masculine, and Ah Fay was therefore an orphan, dependent upon and under the control of his two uncles. They brought him to America at the age of nine, and he had spent two precious years at the public school, until he could speak some English, and could read and write a little less. Then he went to work in a restaurant, where the pay was fairly large, and the duties a great deal larger. Being only eleven years old Ah Fay could not endure it and his health began to fail, and his cheeks to sink in ominously. Then his uncles took him out of the restaurant and waited for him to get well.

Meanwhile the missionaries offered him a situation. Ah Fay, at this time a devout follower of Confucius, considered the proposition with some favor, since the duties were light—in comparison with his past responsibilities. But his uncles positively declined it.

The missionaries, however, were strongly attracted to the personality of the black-eyed Confucian and pressed their offer again, using all the persuasive arts known to honest tongues and kindly hearts. At last the boy yielded and came, but when he returned to his home to sleep his uncles promptly locked him in.

Ah Fay treated his relatives deferentially and proposed many elaborate arguments in favor of his return to the mission, but was in turn made cognizant of several facts, attested by all the well-informed Chinamen of the colony, *viz* :

That association with the foreign people produced a peculiar aberration of mind upon the part of the Chinese. That such Chinese invariably forsook the old and highly respected customs of their ancestors, which ancestors were the true sons of heaven, and their land the empire of the sun, the most favored of the nations of the earth, and beside which all others were ignorant barbarians.

Moreover, it was the common practice among all these ignorant foreigners, as was known and attested by every Chinaman of learning and repute, to give to such Chinese as they desired to influence, the Draught of Folly, which was a cup of foreign medicine which caused every Chinese to immediately believe all that the foreigner told him, so that he became his captive forever after.

It was to save their son and nephew from such an abominable fate that they therefore refused to permit him to enter the foreign employ.

To which Ah Fay replied :

That the work was very respectable, being connected

with a school, which to the Chinese mind is very meritorious; that the duties were light and therefore within his ability; that he was a true son of the great Confucius and could not be influenced by the foreigners' ignorant ideas of religion; that he would never drink any foreign medicine. And thereupon Ah Fay broke the lock and went to the mission.

He stayed a year, but alas for his Confucianism! It faded out like a mist before the shining of a noonday sun. He laughed at the story of the foreign medicine, but the foreign ideas he drank in with an avidity which astonished even the foreigners themselves. He became a most devout Christian, and his black eyes shone like great stars as he told of his beloved "Jesus-religion," and his reverence and faithfulness, his joy, and his unfailing patience with the proud heathen who came to the mission, caused him to be remarked and beloved by all.

And then came the change. His uncles would endure no more and Ah Fay was dragged off to their laundry. All the authority of kinship and seniority was brought to bear upon the question, and Ah Fay admitted that, according to Chinese ideas, he had been gravely disobedient. The missionaries came to see him and begged him to return, but with a grave, patient smile he said:

"Me workee laundry littee while," and remained under the jurisdiction of his uncles.

If the missionaries thought he preferred this change of employment they were gravely mistaken. But even missionaries are sometimes short-sighted. Now the brightness had left his eyes, and the happy, boyish light-heartedness

slowly died out. He had been wont to sing all the day long, now he worked patiently, silently, ceaselessly. Before, his favorite texts were always on his lips, and one was a most fitting one. It exactly expressed his feelings, and you might have heard him repeat it a score of times a day: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." But now he never spoke it, and scarcely any other. Before he had been bright and happy, with all the spirit of a healthy, hearty boy. But now he grew pale and thin and quieter day by day.

He sometimes conversed with his uncles, and as his health declined he did this the oftener. Long, quiet, earnest talks they were on his part, but sometimes angry and excited on theirs. The old Irish woman who kept a fish market next door one day saw them strike him with a hot iron in the midst of one of these conversations, and she afterward gave him some ointment to put on the burn, but he offered no resistance to the violence, and by and by he talked to them again. She often wondered what he found to talk about in that quiet way so long at a time, and why it made his uncles so angry, but he never told her, and not a word of Chinese did she understand.

But the blows with the flat irons were not the only violence that Ah Fay had suffered at the hands of his uncles. When the laundry was closed late at night and on the particular fast days, the two men stood in the back room and bowed down to their wooden god, and when Ah Fay would not worship with them they dragged him and knocked him down, so that he fell before the idol and lay there for a time unconscious.

When he would not place the incense, nor drink the wine, nor offer prayer before the house gods, nor bend in the worship of his ancestors, they beat him, and one day they cut him with their knives. But he did not die, at least not then.

He had been in the laundry for nearly two years, and the missionaries seldom saw him or heard of him, when one day, after he had been talking a long time to his uncles, and their anger was at the highest pitch, he suddenly fell over on his ironing table, and a stream of red blood gushed from his mouth.

"A devil! A devil!" cried his uncles. "He has a devil."

They pulled him off the table and on his hard bed, and after a time the hemorrhage stopped, but he could not rise or speak for many days. And then when he tried to work a little again, there came another one.

After this he was violently ill. The old Irish woman came in once and told him to get the doctor, but his uncles despised the American medicine and would have none of it. They brought him some herbs from Chinatown, and made a tea for him, but he was too sick to drink it. Then his mind began to wander, and their fear of the evil spirits returned. Without more ado they took his case in hand. Wong Yo set off firecrackers in the front and rear of the house, and even within doors to frighten away any other demons that might be lurking around to get inside of some one, and Hop Hoy burned incense and said prayers to ward off the anger of the gods. When night came and Ah Fay's ravings had not yet ceased, they shut the doors and

stretched him on the ironing table, and tried to find the hole where the demons got in him. But finding none, they determined to make one for them to get out. With a sharp knife they made an incision in his side, and ran in a hollow bamboo stick as an outlet for the tormenting spirits.

Poor Ah Fay tossed and groaned under his persecutors' hands, and then lay in a stupor until morning.

But with morning his reason slowly returned. He tried to pull out the stick, but it was too deeply imbedded and he could not. Then summoning all his strength, while his uncles still slept, he dragged himself to the door and reached for his hat. With almost superhuman strength he boarded a passing street car, and sank into a corner where he quietly fainted away.

In the other end of the car a missionary sat, and he looked up just in time to see Ah Fay's head fall over and his eyes shut in that deathly faint. With a bound he was by his side and trying vainly to restore him.

After a time Ah Fay opened his eyes and recognized his old friend.

"Me jus' go home mission to die," he said.

The missionary's voice choked as he tried to reply and he gave it up, but pillowed the weak head on his arm until they passed a cab stand and then he lifted the exhausted boy into a carriage and drove to the mission house.

Up the stairs they bore him and laid him on his own white bed in the familiar room. Beloved faces were about him, and tender hands ministered to his needs. The doctors came, and with stern faces they removed the cruel bamboo rod from his side, and sewed up the gaping wound.

They administered quieting draughts and gave him nourishing food. They did all that human power and love and tenderness could do, to bring back the ebbing strength, but it was too late.

Day by day he slowly but surely neared the heavenly home, and as he drew near his tongue was loosed again.

"Me no want go laundly," he said. "But Holy Spirit say go. Many times me pray to Jesus-God make me good missionary go back China countlee, but Holy Spirit all time say, 'Go laundly, tell de uncles. Me no want go, but must go. So me go tell de uncles. Me talk, talk evvy day. Me too muchee talk, den dey get mad, hittee me so bad. Me no care, talk, talk, jus' same. Now me come back mission littee while. Plitty soon die now, go home Jesus' house.'"

"Oh, we cannot let you die, Ah Fay. There is so much good you can do here. Try to get well and strong. We will pray that you shall get well."

Ah Fay shook his head.

"No get well any more. Go home Jesus' house much better. Me so glad."

When Sunday came again, and the dear familiar hymns sounded once more in his ears, a look of ineffable peace stole into the dying face, and he lay in a silent ecstasy until far into the night, when the watchers saw the last change come, and the gentle, steadfast spirit went home to its Redeemer.

They buried him among the Christian dead, and upon the white stone was written :

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Three years later the mission sent out two notable converts as missionaries to China. They had been redeemed from the deepest heathenism, and as ensamples of men "to whom much had been forgiven," they also loved and suffered and endured much for the sake of the Divine One they served. Their names were Wong Yo and Hop Hoy, and for many years their labors were known throughout the Christian world. But to them there is no memory so sacred as that of a green grave and a simple white headstone in a far-away land across the seas, commemorating the sacrifice of the faithful Christian boy, Ah Fay.

VII

TAI MUN

TAI MUN

ROB CONROY stood listening at the bedroom window. Across the air-shaft he could hear the swishing sound of Tai Mun's scrubbing brush, but he could not see her. He listened for a time in discreet silence, but hearing no sound of Hop Jai, Tai Mun's mistress, he at last ventured a low whistle, very much like the twitter of a sparrow. Tai Mun knew that whistle, and it often sent a thrill of joy through her heart, unless she was too completely weighed down by fear to be cheered by anything. She heard it now, and for an instant she dared to be glad, but dread of Hop Jai's return made her afraid to give any sign.

Hop Jai had gone to Hong Sue's to play dominoes, and even now Tai Mun could hear the clatter of the little bone blocks on the table in the next apartment, accompanied by the chatter of the women's tongues. But that whistle was hard to resist, and Tai Mun strove to respond by scrubbing harder than ever, and making wide sweeps over the floor with her brush, so as to cover the distance into the back room as quickly as possible. Bob realized that the swishing was coming nearer, and waited patiently until sundry knocks against the doorjamb told that Tai Mun's brush, at least, was crossing the threshold. A moment more and he could just descry her diminutive figure bent over the wet brush, while her face was set resolutely toward her task.

"Tai Mun! Tai Mun!" called Rob softly. "Hop Jai gone out?" Tai Mun nodded, but did not raise her face. How warm her heart grew when the "Ilish boy" stood across the air-shaft.

"What she do to you to-day? She lickee?" Tai Mun nodded again. When was there ever a day that she did not get a beating?

"Let's see. Can't you come over by the window? She won't know."

Tai Mun shrank back. She dared not. What if the door should open?

"Just let me see your face once? Got that scar yet?" Her lip quivered; as if that awful scar ever could go away!

"You don't know what's good for you, Tai Mun. You don't have to stand this kind of a racket. Don't you know this is a free country? There ain't no slaves in this country. Why don't you get out?"

Tai Mun looked up in sheer amazement. The awful scar, a white seam down her cheek, gleamed in the faint light of the room.

"Why don't you get out?" repeated Bob, his voice growing thick, as it always did when he looked at that scar.

"Me China girl," answered Tai Mun briefly, as if that answered every possible argument.

"What difference does that make? You're not in China. You're in America. If I was you, I'd cut a kind of people that treated me like that."

"Me no can cut. Me no want cut Hop Jai."

"Oh, I don't mean to hit her with a knife. I just mean to get out. Why don't you go somewhere else?"

"Me go out door, Hop Jai ketch, killee me for sure."

"Can't you come over here? My ma won't let her kill you."

"Oh, no ; me flaid," there was a ring of terror in Tai Mun's voice, and she fell back to scrubbing with terrible earnestness, not lifting her face again toward the air-shaft. What unspeakable thing would not Hop Jai do, to say nothing of her master, Kay Jow, if they knew what the "Ilish boy" had said to her? Tai Mun did not dare to think of it. Already her fears were forcing the ever-ready tears over her drawn cheeks, and she clutched her brush with a deadly grip between her sobs. Rob watched her for a time and then went away, discouraged in his efforts for his sad little neighbor.

When her scrubbing was all done, Tai Mun crept under the table in the kitchen, her one place of refuge while awaiting the orders of her relentless mistress.

She lay on the floor, her shrunken figure looking smaller than ever as she drew up her unclothed feet into her ragged jacket. Her black hair, unshaven, hung from her crown in straggling, unkempt locks, while her queue, not combed for many weeks, was a bristle of knotted hairs down to the string with which it was tied.

Poor little Tai Mun ! She was only a Chinese slave girl, starved and beaten, and goaded by threats until fear had almost turned her brain. Her hands were horny and the joints knotted and out of shape with hard work. Her cheeks were hollow from hunger and her eyes glittered with ever-present terror. Her poor hands clutched one another pathetically as she lay under the table and slept

from pure exhaustion. She was really ten years old, but she was no larger than a child of six. She had been sleeping for an hour or so when there mingled with her dreams a soft, sweet sound, penetrating and clear, yet so sweet that Tai Mun sat up, astonished. What was it? She had never heard anything like that before! She glanced toward the air-shaft. There was a light in the rooms across, and she vaguely remembered that some one had said that a "doke shee"¹ had moved in there. Did a "doke shee" make music? And such wonderful music as that?

God loved the world of sinners lost,
And ruined by the fall,

so sang the voices in soft Chinese cadence.

Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God to me.

Tai Mun listened. What strange words! Did a god love? She had never heard that before. The gods she worshiped only hated her and brought her bad luck. What kind of God did this "doke shee" have?

And then she heard a man's voice, praying. What a queer prayer! He was talking to the "doke shee" God, and he talked as if he loved the god, and as if the god really loved him. And he called the God father! Tai Mun thought she must be dreaming yet, or else the "doke shee" man was crazy. But his voice sounded so gentle and kind that she could not think him crazy. What did it all mean?

And then they sang again. But Tai Mun could not

¹ School.

understand that song. It was something about being sad and forsaken, and about the darkness, and some one calling. And then these words sounded out loud and clear, and seemed to fall on her listening ear like a thunder peal :

Flee from thy bondage, Jesus will help thee,
Only believe him, and thou shalt be free ;
Wonderful mercy, boundless compassion,
Still the Good Shepherd is calling to thee.

Tai Mun gasped. That was what the "Ilish" boy said. Was the "doke shee" God speaking to her ?

Calling to thee, calling to thee,
Jesus is calling, Come unto me.

The good "doke shee" God calling to her? It was too good to be believed. The "doke shee" God who loved, calling to her, the little Chinese slave? A hard, dry sob shook her breast, and she reached out her poor, disfigured hands toward the window as she answered : "Oh, me want come so bad !"

But that cry of her own voice, breaking the stillness of the room with its heart-rending pathos, was heard next door, and with heavy steps Hop Jai strode into the room.

"What for you scream?" she demanded angrily, and then the cowering figure was jerked out upon the floor and cruel blows rained upon it thick and fast.

The heavy weeks passed by, and Tai Mun's face grew thinner and her disjointed hands grew harder and more bony with every day's dreadful toil. Hop Jai was indeed a hard mistress. But we should not judge her too harshly. She also had been a slave girl, and had never known any-

thing but hardship and cruelty all her life. When she was at last married, her husband also beat her and abused her, and she in turn vented her own anger and resentment on the defenseless servant. So cruel and incessant were the beatings that poor Tai Mun could scarcely crawl, and when she had to stand upright and wash the dishes she cried all the time with pain.

Her only solace was the "doke shee" across the air-shaft, and if she could lie still under the table while they were singing she forgot her sorrows in the sweet words about the "doke shee's" God.

It was her one pleasure. Eagerly she listened, intent upon catching every word, and as she listened there grew in her heart a great boundless yearning to see the "doke shee" God.

Her own gods were so ugly that she dreaded to look up at their faces over the altar, and one of them looked so much like Kay Jow, her master, that she trembled every time she put up the incense-sticks or placed the rice and wine offerings. It could not be that the "doke shee" God was like that. He must be like the songs, and like the voice of the man who prayed, sweet and kind. Oh, if she could but see him, just one look into the face of the kind God who loved, and she would not mind the beatings or the hunger. The air-shaft was not very wide at the window by the table. She believed she could step across if only Hop Jai would never find it out. But at the very thought her little heart almost fainted with fear, and she knew she never would dare to do such a thing.

One day when Hop Jai was out and the "Ilish boy" had

whistled, she crept over close to the bedroom window and whispered a question across. Now the bedroom in the tenement is just behind the kitchen and each has a window into the air-shaft. The "Ilish boy's" mother had rooms in the back of the building on the other side of the shaft, and her bedroom was just opposite Hop Jai's bedroom, but the mission was opposite Hop Jai's kitchen. Tai Mun was very much afraid to go to these windows. Her mistress had strictly forbidden it, for Hop Jai was afraid some of the American people would see how badly Tai Mun was beaten. When the little girl crept over to the window, it was therefore after a great exercise of courage, almost more courage than she possessed, and she had not strength enough left to speak above a whisper.

"What do you say?" asked Rob, striving to hear.

"You see de 'doke shee' joss?"

"'Doke shee' joss. What's 'doke shee'?"

"In dere," and Tai Mun pointed toward the mission.

"Oh, I know what you mean. You mean the mission. But they ain't got no joss. They worship a real God, a real, live God. He's Jesus."

"Yeh, Yesu."

"What do you know about him?"

"Not'ing. Only hear sing music. De Yesu God very good?"

"Well, I guess," said Rob dryly.

"No hit slave girl?"

"Hit a slave girl? Tai Mun, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Jesus is good, I tell you. He loves people. He loves the whole earth. He don't hit nobody."

"Oh, me want see so bad!"

"I say, Tai Mun, why don't you get out of this, and come be a Christian, like decent people. Lots of your China people worship the Christian God. I'll tell you, I've got a cousin that's on the police. If you'll say you'll go, I'll tell him to come and get you."

"Oh, no, me flaid! Me flaid! Hop Jai killee me!" and Tai Mun shrank back from the window.

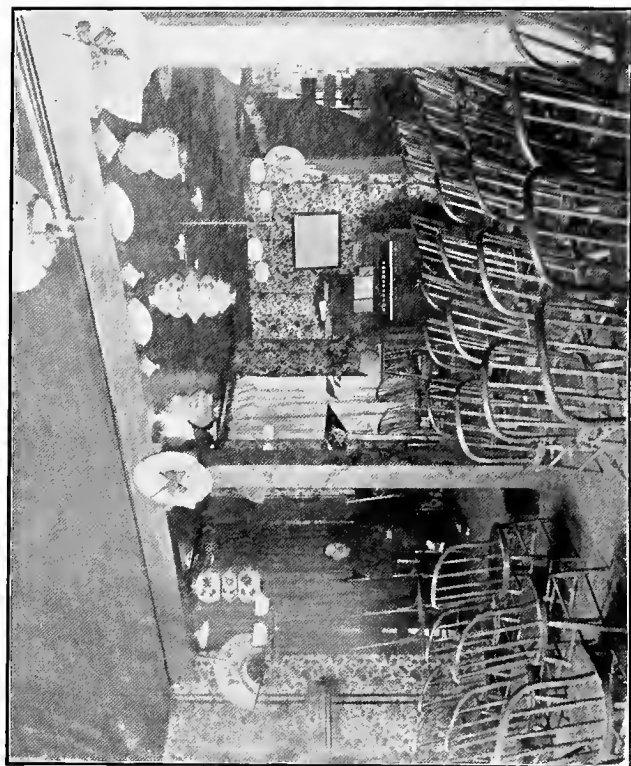
"I tell you we won't let her kill you. We'll——"

Rob had unconsciously raised his voice, and an instant later there was a rattle of the door knob and poor Tai Mun was seized and dragged into the kitchen. When at last she lay under the table again she had fainted away. Poor Rob was filled with dismay. He heard the cruel blows and ground his teeth with anger. But he was powerless to help his little friend, and rushed away determined to tell his cousin the policeman.

They were over in the joss-house, a party of Americans, who had come down to see the strange sights of Chinatown.

"And is that their god?" asked the minister, as he gazed upon a pictured face, dimly visible behind the embroidered hangings and gilded panels of the idol altar.

"It is one of their gods," replied the interpreter. "The Chinese worship many gods. In this country they are represented mostly by pictures, but they have brought some idols also. These curious little figures represent people whom the Chinese believe to dwell in the sky and to be immortal. The priests declare that these "sky-men," as they call them, occasionally come down to earth and show themselves to some person, so that he may testify that



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they are still living. Every few years the story will go about that some one has seen one of these sky-men, and so they continue to worship them. Here is the great umbrella, and the shields and banners they carry in the religious processions on their feast days, and here on the altar are the offerings of fruit and confections which they make to their gods. Here are the wooden blocks and the tablets they use in divining, for their worship is only to appease the gods and to induce them to reveal the future and to send them good luck."

The party examined the great glass case of carvings in a solid block of wood which was bronzed to look like metal. In these carvings a religious feast was represented, with the great joss above the altar, and the priests approaching with the roasted pig which was to be offered. The Americans looked at all these with wonder, and then departed to visit the Christian Chinese in their mission.

Hop Jai was a North China woman, and her dialect was unintelligible to her neighbors. Hence they were forced to use English when they spoke to her. "Hop Jai, you lickee Tai Mun too muchee," said Fung Mui, as they resumed their dominoes.

Hop Jai grew very angry.

"Tai Mun all the time bad girl," she answered.

"Maybe bad girl, no good lickee too muchee," argued Fung Mui. "Maybe you gettee bad luck by and by; may be Tai Mun die."

Scarcely were the words out of Fung Mui's mouth when they all screamed. Five-year-old Ah Fu had come in, her

black queue unbraided and streaming over her back as mourners wear it. "Oh, look, de hair! Hop Jai, dat for you. Dat de bad luck, de awful bad luck for you!"

The women shrank back, while Ah Fu's mother snatched the child and hurriedly braided the hair that had betokened such dire misfortune. But Hop Jai fled, trembling, back to her home, to put fresh offerings before her god, to overcome, if possible, the horrid spell of the mourners' hair.

Tai Mun lay motionless under the table. In the mission a light was burning, and now the people began to sing. At the sound the slave girl stirred and muttered in delirium, but Hop Jai was too much engrossed to notice. Song after song was sung, and then once more the words that had so pierced the heart of the captive rang upon her ear :

Flee from thy bondage, Jesus will help thee,
Only believe him and thou shalt be free.

Tai Mun sat up, gazing toward the airshaft with wild eyes.

Calling to thee, calling to thee,
Jesus is calling, Come unto me.

She seemed drawn as if by a magnet. She crept to the window, oblivious to her surroundings, and reached up to the sill. Out across the shaft she stretched her disfigured hands, and again that piteous, heart-rending cry rang out : "Oh, me want come so bad!" And all the pent-up agony of her lifetime was in the piercing tones. There was instant commotion. Americans and Chinese were at the window. A little withered face and two wasted arms reached toward them.

"What is it! What is it!" they cried.

"It is Kay Jow's slave girl," answered the missionary.

"But she is in pain. She is in trouble. Can't we help her?" They reached out to clasp the slave girl's hands, but the iron bars across the window prevented. Besides, Hop Jai already had her in her grasp.

"Oh, how terrible! She is beating her!" cried the Americans.

"Here, stop that. Woman, let that child alone," called the missionary, but the blows rained on.

"Is there no way of reaching her? Oh, can no one stop her?" The missionary dashed out of the door and down the stairs. At the foot he met Rob, and behind him a tall figure in blue coat and brass buttons. "Officer, come! They are killing that child!" and the minister grasped his arm.

"Oh, it's Tai Mun! It's just as I told you," said Rob, groaning aloud as he bounded up the stairs. The door was bolted, and a crowd of angry Orientals impeded their way, but the officer's club and the exertions of both men finally forced the door. In the middle of the floor lay a motionless figure, whose haggard, upturned face was marked by a terrible scar.

The minister stooped and lifted Tai Mun in his arms, while the officer held the infuriated woman at bay. Then they turned toward the stairs and fought their way to the street.

Here matters would have gone hard with them, had not other policemen come to the rescue, for a mob of Chinese had gathered in the doorway. But after a momentary

battle, they carried the child in safety to the mission. The women took her with tender hands and wiped the blood from her face and hair. They bathed the bruised limbs and clothed her in soft, clean garments. They gave her medicines and food, and watched till life was restored and her reason came back.

When at last Tai Mun opened her eyes and looked up into the gentle faces about her, she could hardly speak for joy, but relieving tears rained down her cheeks. "Yesu take Tai Mun," she whispered at last, as Rob clasped her hand. Then she turned her face from side to side with an eager, yearning look, as if searching for something.

"Where Yesu? Where 'doke shee' God?" she asked.

"What does she mean?" questioned the Americans wonderingly.

But Rob understood, and lifting down a picture from the wall he held it before her eyes. It was Hoffman's group of Christ raising the daughter of Jairus.

Like one famished drinking a plenteous draught of life-giving water, Tai Mun gazed into that lovely pictured face.

"Yesu, Yesu!" she whispered, as though she had found all that heart could desire. And then, at her request, they sang for her, sang all the songs that she loved best, until she fell into a long, quiet sleep.

In the morning the minister called a carriage, and Tai Mun was taken to his own home, and her days of bondage were ended forever.

She grew into a lovely, gentle child, when once the sunshine of human affection shone into her starved heart. The awful scar never quite disappeared from her cheek,

but she became well and strong, and the soft roundness and glow of health nearly hid it. Rob remained always her steadfast friend, but the friend she learned to trust most of all was the Friend of friends, Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTE.—If this story seems to be overdrawn, we would say that similar cases have been rescued by our Christian missionaries in Chinatown, San Francisco.

THE AUTHOR.

